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THE CONQUEROR AND HIS COMPANIONS.

THE CONQUEROR

AND

HIS COMPANIONS.

BY

J. R. PLANCHÉ,

SOMERSET HERALD.

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"We find but few historians of all ages who have been diligent enough in their search for truth. It is their common method to take on trust what they distribute to the Public, by which means a falsehood once received from a famed writer becomes traditional to posterity."—DRYDEN, *Character of Polybius*

B.2489

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE MOST NOBLE HARRY GEORGE PAULETT,

DUKE OF CLEVELAND, K.G.,

THE PRESENT PROPRIETOR OF BATTLE ABBEY,

THESE VOLUMES ARE, BY PERMISSION,

Inscribed

BY HIS GRACE'S MUCH OBLIGED AND VERY FAITHFUL SERVANT,

J. R. PLANCHÉ.

College of Arms 1874

PREFACE.

I HAVE undertaken a task which would be most agreeable to me but for one important consideration, namely, the difficulty of making the results agreeable to the public.

The subject is one which must not be treated lightly; and yet, to be popular, it must be free from the heaviness almost inseparable from the records of archæological researches and the minutiæ of genealogical details. While retaining sufficient interest for the antiquary, it must not be "caviare to the general," for whom it is intended.

At the first congress of the British Archæological Association, held at Canterbury in 1843, Professor Willis, in the course of his admirable lecture on the cathedral, observed, "I am not addressing a learned assembly." A remark which greatly amused the late

Mr. Buckland, next to whom I was sitting, and who, repeating the words with a chuckle, pulled out his pocket-book and "made a note of it."

The remark, however, was perfectly correct, though open to misinterpretation. The majority of the audience was composed of ladies and gentlemen of more or less cultivated tastes residing in the neighbourhood, and many of the principal inhabitants of the city with their wives and families, who listened with interest to the eloquent description of their magnificent cathedral, but to whom such technical illustration as the erudite Professor would have indulged in at a meeting of the Institute of Architects would have afforded no gratification whatever.

I know from many years' experience how hard it is to pull up a hobby we are riding the moment its pace is carrying us ahead of the desire or power of an audience to follow us; and the difficulty is greater in writing than speaking, as you cannot feel the effect you are producing on the reader, nor perceive the first symptoms of his weariness or inattention.

At the same time the object of these volumes would be completely defeated if I cantered carelessly over ground every foot of which presents some point of

interest—some curious illustration of manners and customs—and raises some question of importance affecting the ages, actions, or characters of historical personages whose names are "familiar in our mouths as household words," and from whom so many English families are proud to trace their descent.

The casual mention of the most important which is to be found in the various histories of England, affords little information respecting them, and a Baronage or Historical Peerage is, by the special nature of the work, limited to the descent of a title and the briefest possible notice of the original possessor. The more detailed biographies to be picked out of the ancient chronicles are, even when translated, not generally accessible to the public, and, being the composition of monks, are too frequently tinctured by the prejudices of the writers in favour of the benefactors or against the oppressors of their respective establishments.

Nor can the information of these worthy men be implicitly relied upon. Living out of the world—in nine cases out of ten far removed from the scene of action—they must generally have been dependent on hearsay, and gathered their knowledge of events in

Normandy or England from common report in their own neighbourhood or the narrations of the travellers hospitably entertained in their refectories.

Even these accounts were not invariably recorded at the moment, and we have therefore to make allowances for defects of memory, errors of transcription, and inaccuracies from many circumstances too familiar to literary men to require enumeration.

Every page, nearly, of these volumes will show the necessity of receiving the evidence of the most respectable authorities with the greatest caution; of testing them by their comparison one with the other, and especially by the light of charters and official and legal records, which are themselves free from suspicion—a character, unfortunately, not enjoyed by all. Even then, where the testimony is not absolutely conclusive, we must exercise our judgment independently in our adoption of the statement, and not suffer it to be swayed by the weight of a name or the age of a document.

Archæologists are becoming daily more and more impressed with the truth, and need not my referring to it; but I am addressing the public generally, and not "a learned assembly." And it is but fair to the author of such a work as this that the uninitiated

should have some idea of the amount as well as of the character of the labour required of him, if he be honest, before he can throw his narrative into a shape that will be acceptable to them. How far I have succeeded in doing so has yet to be proved. Apart from my own demerits as a writer, I may have miscalculated on the popularity of the subject,—measured, to use a familiar proverb, other people's corn too much by my own bushel. It is a common error, and has misled many before me. If so, it is too late to recede: "I have set my life," or rather my *lives*, upon a cast, and I must run the hazard of the die. By collecting the numberless scattered notices of the principal companions of the Conqueror, connecting them chronologically, and arranging them under separate heads, I have endeavoured to make a readable book as well as one of reference for all who take an interest in the origin or actions of our earliest Anglo-Norman nobility, the majority of whom are scarcely known by name beyond a limited circle of antiquaries, and who, whatever may have been their crimes or their vices—partly attributable to the semi-barbarism of the age they lived in—it must never be forgotten were the progenitors of men to whom England is indebted for the preservation of her

liberties—who would never submit to their being trampled under the foot of a Tyrant, and whose unanimous answer was—

"Nollumus leges Angliæ mutari."

INTRODUCTION.

In anticipation of a question that may naturally arise from the perusal of these volumes, respecting the omission of the names of certain families both noble and gentle, the ancestors of which were clearly contemporary with the Conquest and traditionally conducive to it, I beg the reader's attention to the following brief statement of the reasons which decided me in adopting the plan I have worked upon.

A reliable list of the principal personages who actually accompanied William Duke of Normandy to England in 1066, and were present in the great battle commonly called of Hastings, does not exist.

The various versions of the Roll of Battle Abbey are admitted on all hands to be not only imperfect, but, what is much worse, interpolated to an extent which it is now impossible for us to ascertain; and the lists compiled by eminent modern French anti-

quaries, though no doubt containing the names of many persons not to be found in the older Rolls, but recently discovered by diligent research in authentic documents abroad, are still far from complete, and open to many objections.

In professing, therefore, to write about "the Conqueror and his Companions," it was in the first place imperatively necessary to ascertain who his companions really were, and for the above reasons that was in numberless cases impracticable.

Again, if I decided in favour of any particular list, it was evident on inspection that a third of my book would consist of names alone, and another third of notices, not of the companions themselves, but of their descendants, which was altogether away from my purpose in writing it.

A third reason was the number. The Roll of Battle Abbey, formerly suspended in the building, consisted of no less than 645 names. Duchesne's list, derived from a charter formerly in the Abbey, contains 405 names. One of the lists printed in Leland's Collectanea gives us 498. The other is nothing more than a ludicrous blunder, which I have exposed elsewhere; and the rhyming catalogue, printed in Brompton's Chronicle, includes 245. Monsieur de Magny's cata-

logue contains 425, and that compiled by Monsieur Leopold Delisle, in the church at Dive, 485; the principal additions being the names of persons whose families are unknown in this country, and consequently possessing no interest for the reader of English History.

To make a selection from these—to compile, in fact, a list of my own, would have been as presumptuous as invidious. Hundreds who believe their ancestors "came over with the Conqueror," because their names, or something like them, are to be found in one of these doubtful documents, would naturally have felt offended at my omission of them.

I saw but one way to justify my title and avoid offence, and that was to limit my notices to those personages who are recorded by contemporary or nearly contemporary writers as having been present in the Norman host at Hastings, or at least conspicuous in England during the four years immediately following, at the expiration of which period (that is, in 1070) the subjugation of the entire kingdom was virtually accomplished.

With this object I decided on taking the elaborate account of the invasion and the battle given by Master Wace in his "Roman de Rou" as the foundation of

my work, supplementing and illustrating it by the information directly or indirectly afforded me by writers who were actually living at the time of the Conquest, or must have known and conversed with persons who, if not present themselves in the conflict, retained a vivid recollection of the event, or had gathered the reports of it from those who were.

Wace, born in Jersey at the commencement of the reign of Henry I. (A.D. 1100), some four-and-thirty years after the landing at Pevensey, was taken when young to Caen in Normandy for education, made a prebend of Bayeux by Henry II., completed his "Roman de Rou" (a metrical history of the Duke of Normandy) in 1160, and died in England subsequently to 1173.

The early portions of his "Roman" he copied from Dudo, Dean of St. Quentin, and Guillaume de Jumiéges; but his materials for the history of William the Conqueror, and specially of the invasion of 1066, were drawn from original and independent sources, the verbal descriptions of the veteran survivors of the great battle, their sons or other relatives, and the gossip, if you will, in general circulation, while the details of that momentous event were yet fresh in the recollections of numbers both in England and in Nor-

mandy; some of whom, as children, might have been eye-witnesses of the muster at the mouth of the Dive, or the march of the invaders from Hastings to Hetheland.

The writers contemporary with the Conquest, in addition to those already mentioned, were, 1, Guillaume de Poitiers, the chaplain of Duke William; 2, the author of a Latin poem on the Battle of Hastings, supposed to have been Guy, Bishop of Amiens, almoner to the Duchess Matilda; 3, Orderic Vital, author of the Ecclesiastical History, born at Atcham, near Shrewsbury, in 1075, in which city he was sent to school, when five years old, by his father Odelirius, who was in the service of the powerful Roger de Montgomeri, Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury. At the age of ten he was transferred to Normandy, and became a monk in the Abbey of Ouche, otherwise St. Evroult. In 1115 he returned to England to collect materials for his history, and in 1141 was compelled by age and infirmity to bring his work to a conclusion. Like Wace, he was indebted for some of his information to Guillaume de Jumiéges, whose Gesta Normanorum was finished during the life of the Conqueror and dedicated to him; but the peculiar advantages he enjoyed for the execution of his task

will be frequently commented on in the course of these volumes.

Robert du Mont, one of the continuators of the monk of Jumiéges, and Benoît de Sainte-More, a contemporary of Wace, may be added to the short list of fairly original writers on the subject immediately under consideration. All the subsequent chroniclers and historians, both foreign and English, are mere copyists of each other in rotation until they arrive at their own times, and are rarely, therefore, of assistance to us in the investigation of those of the Conqueror.

"Domesday" not having been compiled until nearly the close of William's reign, that invaluable record is only occasionally of service, as many of the companions of the Conqueror had died in the interim and are not named in it, or the lands they had received in reward for their assistance had passed into the hands of their descendants—facts which require careful consideration when identification is the object.

The personages distinctly named or apparently indicated by Wace amount altogether to one hundred and eighteen, twenty-seven of whom are either progenitors of some of the most illustrious families in England, or have indelibly made their mark in its history for good or for evil. Of these the reader will find notices con-

taining all the information I have been able to scrape together, biographical or genealogical.

The remainder, less known, and in some cases not identified, and therefore furnishing no materials for memoirs, I have arranged alphabetically in the last chapter of the second volume, accompanied by the annotations of Monsieur Le Prévost and Mr. Edgar Taylor, the French and English editors of the Roman de Rou, and such of my own as I have been able to add to them.

Wace honestly says at the conclusion of what may be called his Roll, "many other Barons there were whom I have not even mentioned, for I cannot give an account of them all, nor can I describe all their deeds, for I would not be tedious; neither can I give the names of all the Barons, nor the surnames of all who came from Normandy and Brittany in the company of the Duke."

Benoît also says briefly that if he had undertaken to enumerate all the chiefs in the Duke's army, three quires of parchment would not have sufficed to contain them.

However it may be regretted that a complete and authentic catalogue has not been handed down to us, we must console ourselves with the reflection, that of

the host of Norman, Breton, Angevine, Poitevine, Flemish, and other foreign families represented by one or more members in that great expedition, hundreds would simply contribute to swell the already too long list of names to which no personal history attaches—no general interest could now be imparted.

In conclusion let me observe, that having described herein the few works that can be looked upon at all in the light of authorities for the Life and Times of William the Conqueror, I have abstained from encumbering my pages with unnecessary notes and references. The antiquary will know whence the general information is derived, and the less critical reader's attention is only directed to its source where vouchers for my own assertions and opinions are essentially demanded.

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THE CONQUEROR AND HIS COMPANIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEROR.

Everybody knows that William II., Duke of Normandy, invaded England, defeated Harold near Hastings, and established himself on the throne of this kingdom. Most persons of ordinary education are cognizant of many other facts connected with his history and that of his Queen Matilda:—the unauthenticated tale of his courtship; the conspiracies against him both in Normandy and England; the revolt of his son Robert; the compilation of Domesday; the fatal injury at Mantes; his death, and the disgraceful scenes which followed it. Hume and Henry, Turner and Lingard, one or all of our national historians are to be found on the shelves of every English gentleman's library. I am not going to fight the battle over again, nor repeat the often told story

of the Conquest and its consequences. It is a personal and domestic, not a general or political, history I am writing, and the great public events of the reign of William the Conqueror will be only alluded to in support or contradiction of statements which are disputable, or when newly discovered or hitherto neglected details can add to their interest or contribute to their illustration.

There are two recently published works which it may be thought have anticipated to a great degree the observations I am about to make respecting the Conqueror: Mr. Cobbe's "History of the Norman Kings of England," * and Mr. Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest." † Over a portion of the ground of both I shall naturally have to go; but there are only five chapters of the first which bear slightly upon my subject, and the four massive volumes already issued of the latter, valuable as they must undoubtedly prove to the historical student as an exhaustive collection and minute examination of the principal contemporary authorities, have nothing in common with my

* History of the Norman Kings of England, by Thomas Cobbe, Barrister-at-Law. 8vo. Lond. 1869.

† History of the Norman Conquest, by Edward A. Freeman, M.A. 4 vols. 8vo. London, 1870. The same observations may apply to the late Sir F. Palgrave's still earlier "History of Normandy and England," published in 1864, an unfinished work, as fanciful as it is fascinating.

less pretentious pages beyond the obvious fact of being indebted to the same sources of information.

While, as I have already remarked, the name and fame of William the Conqueror are familiar to all, our national historians are uncertain of the date of his birth; divided in opinion as to the social position of his mother and her parents; at issue respecting the name of her father and the period of her marriage; puzzled by the story of William's courtship of Matilda, which the most incredulous cannot furnish fair evidence of being purely apocryphal; equally unable to prove or disprove the previous marriage of Matilda and the parentage of the mysterious Gundrada; and totally ignorant of the order of birth of the undoubted children of William, and even of the exact names and number of the female portion of them. Strange as this may appear to many of my readers, such is nevertheless the case, as I found on examination of the materials requisite for the compilation of this memoir.

William "the Great," "the Elder," "the Bastard," or "the Conqueror," undoubtedly died in September, 1087, and according to a contemporary historian * he was at that period close upon sixty, in which case he must have been born in 1027 or 1028; but by the same historian he is made to assert upon his death-bed

* Ordericus Vitalis.

that he was sixty-four, which would place the date of his birth in 1023 or 1024, and there are not wanting authorities to corroborate his own—if it be his own—statement, as I shall show to all whom it may concern in the following chapter, it being undesirable to enter into dry discussions of dates in the body of the memoir.

His father was Robert I., Duke of Normandy, styled by some "the Magnificent," from his liberalities and love of splendour; "the Jerusalemite," in consequence of his pilgrimage; and by others less courteously "the Devil," though wherefore or at what period has not been satisfactorily ascertained. From a passage in "L'Estoire de Seint Ædward le Rei," it would appear there was a tradition in the family of Rollo, of one of his descendants (Richard I. ?) having beaten and bound his Satanic majesty,

> "E Duc Richard de'apres li vint,
> Ki li diable ateint e tint
> E le venquit e le lia."

Robert was the second son of Richard II., Duke of Normandy, by his wife Judith, daughter of Conan le Tort (the Crooked), Count of Rennes, and sister of the half blood to Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany; and it was during the lifetime of his father, and while Robert was only Count of the Hiemois, and it may be in his nonage, that he first saw Herleve, Harlett, or Arlot (for it

is written in all manner of ways), daughter of a burgess of Falaise, an accident the results of which were the subjugation of England and the succession of a line of kings unsurpassed for valour and power by the greatest sovereigns in Europe.

"The trade of Herleve's father," says the most recent writer on the subject, "seems to be agreed on at all hands. He was a burgess of Falaise, and a tanner."*

Why particularly a tanner, I am at a loss to discover. By the Norman chroniclers he is called in Latin *Pelletarius* and *Pelleciarius*,† and in French *Pelletier* and *Parmentier*, never by any authority *Tanneur* or *Coriarius*. *Pelletier* signifies a furrier, skinner, or fellmonger, and *Parmentier* a tailor.‡ Now the insult offered to William at Alençon, where a skin was hung out and beaten to the cry of "La Pel, la Pel al Parmentier," in allusion to his maternal origin, is more applicable to the trade of a dealer in furs or leather than to a tanner. The vendor of furs must have been of some importance in those days,

* Freeman: History of the Norman Conquest, vol. ii. p. 611.

† Guill. de Jumiéges, "Parentes matris ejus, *pelliciarii* existiterant," whence the modern word pelisse, from the French *pelice, pelisson*.

‡ Permentarius seu Parmentarius ex Paramentarius qui vestes parat, id est ornat nostris olim *Parmentier* qui hodie, *tailleur d'habits*. Ducange in voce. "Parmentier, or taylor," Cotgrave.

One MS. reads "Pantonnier," which is simply an abusive epithet, signifying "a lewd, stubborn, saucy knave." Ibid.

when garments lined or trimmed with fur were worn by both sexes and all classes; from the princely ermine, the sumptuous sable, the vair and minie-vair of the nobility to the humble budge or lambskin of the citizen or artizan. Leather must also have been in great demand, for not only were leathern jackets and leggings worn by workmen, but archers and the common soldiery were equipped with leathern *Jaques;* that is, coats made of what is called "jacked leather," and the Anglo-Saxons we find wearing helmets made of the same material. The furrier, skinner, or leather-seller would then, as in the present day, not only sell the materials but the robes, mantles, or vestments, the *jaques,* or coats of which they were made, or with which they were lined and ornamented, and "Parmentier" (tailor) would be considered probably in the eleventh century a more contemptuous allusion to the maternal descent of the chivalrous young duke than "Pelletier," furrier, or skinner. It is true that at Falaise there were in former times many tanneries, of which only three of importance remained in 1830 (Galeron, "Histoire de Falaise," p. 121); but we learn from Wace that in the eleventh century it was equally well known as the abode of furriers or skinners: "U *peletiers* aveit asez" (*Roman de Rou,* l. 9462), and it by no means follows that the father of

Herleve should of necessity have been of the former "unsavory calling." There is no reason that a tanner should be less respectable than a furrier,* and the distinction may be thought by some of little consequence, particularly as in the eleventh century the trades might have been combined; but it would be interesting to ascertain the origin of the English designation, which is certainly not justified by either the French or the Latin versions of the story.

And who were the parents of Herleve, whatever may have been their occupation? Here, again, we meet with nothing but contradictions: Fact and Fiction, like the old powers of light and darkness, struggling for mastery. That her father was a burgess of Falaise in some way of trade is incontestable. Sir Francis Palgrave (Hist. of Norm.), upon the authority of Alberic de Troisfontaines, says he was a brewer as well as a tanner, a combination of crafts prohibited in England. But what was his name? By one he is called Fulbert and Robert; by another Richard, with the sobriquet or descriptive appellation of *Saburpyr*, which has yet to be explained;

* All authorities do not agree as to the "obloquy" attached to the leather trade insisted on by Sir F. Palgrave. "The tanners, the furriers, the goldsmiths, and the jewellers' arts, so far as they relate to dress, will appear to have been practised with great success by the Normans, and so far as we can judge from record, with as much *honour* as profit."—Strutt: Dress and Habits of the People of England, vol. i. part 3, cap. 1.

while a third names him indifferently "Herbert or Verperay."* Her mother, as the wife of Richard, is named Helen, and represented as a descendant of the royal Anglo-Saxon family; while, as the wife of Robert, she is said to be one Dodo or Duxia, who came with her husband from the neighbourhood of Liége and settled at Falaise.

The narrator of this last version also tells us that Count Robert saw the daughter of his provost or bailiff dancing, and fell in love with her, but that the daughter of the tanner was substituted for her. Another story is that it was Herleve herself whom he first saw dancing; and the third version is that Robert, returning from hunting, saw Herleve washing linen in the brook which runs through the dell below the castle; while the tradition popular in the place itself is that he observed her so occupied from a window of the castle, which is still pointed out to the tourist, as well as the very apartment in which William was born, though it is doubtful if any portion whatever of the original structure is in existence, or that he could possibly have discerned her from it in any case. Whether any grains of truth will ever be picked out of this bushel of fable I will not presume to say.

* Ducarel: Ant. Ang.-Norm. Galeron, Histoire de Falaise (1830), p. 81, has "La Fille de Vertprey."

There is nothing improbable in either of the former stories, but as they differ one from another, no dependence can be placed on any one of them. Count Robert, a young, gay, voluptuous prince, would not be many days in Falaise without knowing by sight every girl with any pretension to beauty in his little capital. He is just as likely to have seen Herleve at mass or in the market, in the streets of Falaise, or in the shop of her father, probably his own furrier, for according to certain local documents it would seem that William was born in a house belonging to his grandfather in the old market-place of that town, and that he was baptized in the parish church dedicated to the Holy Trinity.* This fact is curiously corroborative of the story told by Wace in the "Roman de Rou" of the infamous William Talvas, Seigneur of Belesme, who being one day in the streets of Falaise, was accosted by a burgess, and laughingly invited to enter a house (not the castle, observe), in which the infant William was being nursed, and look upon the child of his liege lord, Talvas being a feudatory of the Count. That he did so, and cursed the babe, adding prophetically, "for by thee and by thy descendants great mischief will be worked to me

* Langevin: Recherches Historiques sur Falaise, 1814. The site on which the present building stands is described in old documents as "Le manoir du Duc Guillaume." Galeron, Histoire de Falaise, p. 93.

and mine." The grandfather's house being in the market-place strengthens my belief in his calling, as a dealer in furs and skins would be likely to have his shop there; while, if simply a tanner, he would more probably have resided on the banks of the brook in the dell, where the tanneries are at present. All we can tolerably rely on is, that Robert, while only Count of the Hiemois, became enamoured of the daughter of a burgess of Falaise, that he made her his mistress, and had by her two children: William, who succeeded him, and Adelaide, or Adeliza, who eventually married Enguerrand, Count of Ponthieu, and has been an awful stumbling-block in the paths of the genealogists (*vide* p. 121).

Herleve is said to have been extremely beautiful, and was not yielded to the young Count by her father without considerable reluctance. The proposal, made to him by "a discreet ambassador," was received with the greatest indignation; but on consulting, we are told, his brother, who was a holy hermit in the neighbouring forest of Govert or Gouffern, a man of great sanctity,* and who expressed his opinion

* "Ne fust un suen frere, un seint hom
Qui ont de grand relligion.
Qu'en Govert ont son armitage."
Benoît de Sainte-More.
—Nouvelle Histoire de Normandie, par M. le Baron de la Frenay.

that nothing could be refused to their liege lord (an acknowledgment of the "droit de seigneur" savouring more of policy than piety), his scruples were overcome, and Herleve was surrendered to the Count, by whom, we are told, she was treated with all affection and respect as his wife, according to the old Danish custom which still lingered in Normandy, whereby such connections were not regarded in the disreputable light they are at the present day. According to Benoît, the girl was exceedingly proud of her position, insisted on riding to the castle on a palfrey, and refused to enter it by a wicket. "Since the Duke has sent for me, why are his doors closed against me? Throw open the gates, beaux amis!" And her commands were immediately obeyed.

Upon Robert's succession to the dukedom on the death of his elder brother Richard, in 1027, the father of Herleve was appointed his chamberlain, having therefore the care of the robes which he had probably made. Her brother Walter was also attached in some capacity to his person. Their residence in the market-place, we may presume, was now exchanged for an official one, either at Falaise or Rouen, and Herleve and her children were no doubt installed in the ducal apartments. The gossip of the day informs us that William, immediately on being born, was placed

on the straw or rushes with which, according to the custom of that period, the chamber was strewn, and clasped a quantity of it so firmly in his arms, that, coupled with the story that Herleve had dreamed—she saw a tree arise from her body, the branches of which spread out till they overshadowed all Normandy—the nurse was induced to exclaim, "What a great lord wilt thou be! Much wilt thou conquer and obtain. Quickly hast thou filled thy hands and thine arms with the first stuff thou couldst lay hold of." "The Duke," adds the same chronicler, "loved the child as much as if he had been born in wedlock, and caused him to be as richly and as nobly cared for." *

A stronger proof of his affection was soon to be displayed. After Duke Robert had ruled Normandy some seven or eight years, he called together at Fécamp the chief persons in his dominions, announced to them his intention to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and his desire to settle the succession previously to undertaking a perilous journey from which he might never return. His auditors, amongst whom was his uncle Robert, Archbishop of Rouen and Count of Evreux, who had himself pretensions to that succession, strongly opposed his proposition. To leave Normandy under such circumstances would be

* Benoît de Sainte-More; Roger de Hoveden.

ruin to it. The Duke was conjured to remain at home and protect the duchy from the inroads of the Bretons and Burgundians.* Robert, however, was not to be dissuaded from his purpose. "Seigneurs," he said, "you speak truly. I have no direct heir, but I have a little boy, who, if it please you, shall be your Duke, acting under the advice of the King of France, who will be his protector. He is little, but he will grow. I acknowledge him my son. Receive him and you will do well. It may please God that I shall return. If not, he will have been brought up amongst you. He will do honour to his culture, and, if you will promise to love and loyally serve him, I will leave him in my place."

As there were no short-hand writers in those days, no "interviewers," nor any of those means of obtaining and transmitting to the public verbatim reports of the speeches or conversations of important personages, we must take with a considerable quantity of salt the orations placed in their mouths by even contemporary chroniclers. Suffice it to say, therefore, that the boy was sent for, and, whether heartily or not, the whole assemblage took the oath of allegiance and did

* If this be true, neither Guy Count of Burgundy nor Alain Count of Brittany could surely have been present, as asserted by some writers.

homage to the youthful William, then between seven and eight years of age.

Duke Robert lost no time in setting out on his pilgrimage, conducting on the way his son to Paris, where he caused him to do homage to the King for the Duchy of Normandy, and received personal assurance of the royal protection.

We hear nothing of Herleve after the birth of William until she appears as the lawful wife of a Norman knight named Herluin de Conteville,* of whom little is known beyond the fact that he was a widower, father of a son named Ralph, on whom William is said to have bestowed large domains, besides heaping honours and possessions on Herluin, both in Normandy and England, though no one knows what or where. He held the honour of Sainte Marie Eglise, a portion of the Comté of Mortain, but whether the gift of the Conqueror to him, or a family possession, does not appear. He had a castle there, and founded in its neighbourhood the Abbey of Grestain, in which he and his wife were buried. There is tolerably sufficient evidence that, as I have already stated, Herleve had by Duke Robert a daughter, named Adeliza, or

* Père Anselm, vol. ii. p. 470, has the following astounding marginal note :—"D'autres le nomment Gilbert de Crépon"! There may be "more in this than meets the eye" at present.

Adelaide, of whom I shall have much to say anon; but the date of Herleve's marriage to Herluin is uncertain, William of Malmesbury stating it to have taken place before the death of Robert, while the monk of Jumiéges, a contemporary, asserts the contrary. My own opinion is that the contemporary chronicler is in this instance wrong. He either knew nothing, or suppressed his knowledge of Robert's lawful marriage with Estrith, sister of Canute the Great, and widow of Ulf, a distinguished Dane, who was murdered by order of his brother-in-law in 1025. Robert is said to have ill used and repudiated her, at what exact period is unknown; but he had no issue by her, which might possibly be one cause of his displeasure. It seems to me most probable that the marriage of Herleve and Herluin was consequent on that of Duke Robert with Estrith, and shortly after the birth of Adeliza, her second child, who at the period of the pilgrimage could not have been more than six, William being only between seven and eight.

At the time, therefore, of the Council of Fécamp, Herleve would be with her husband, which may account for her not being mentioned by any historian in connection with that event, or associated in any way with the care or education of her son. Gilbert, Comte d'Eu, was appointed his guardian, and Alain,

Count of Brittany, governor of Normandy during the Duke's absence; the latter act being a politic one, as Alain could not with honour harass a province committed to his charge.

Duke Robert died on his return from Jerusalem at Nikaia in Bithynia, poisoned, as it is reported, by Raoul, surnamed Mouin, and no sooner did the intelligence reach Normandy than the young heir to the duchy was subjected to all imaginable dangers and distresses.

Thurkild or Thorold, as he was indifferently called, Lord of Neufmarché-en-Lions, to whose special care his person and education were confided, and Gilbert Comte d'Eu, his guardian, were murdered by assassins hired by Raoul de Gacé, son of Archbishop Robert.* Osbern de Crépon, son of Herfast, his Dapifer (steward of the household), was slain by William de Montgomeri at Vaudreuil, while sleeping in the very chamber of his young sovereign; and Alain Count of Brittany poisoned in 1040, while besieging the castle of Montgomeri, whose lord, Roger, the first we know of that name, and father of the above William, had been already banished Normandy. The guilt of this deed was thrown upon Alain's own subjects by the Normans, and bandied back by them

* See vol. ii. p. 33.

to their accusers. Duke William himself was long afterwards charged with the crime, which, considering he was at that time a mere child, was a slander unworthy refutation, but no doubt engendered by the ill-fame of his subsequent treacheries. "Often by night," William is reported to have said, "I was secretly taken from the chamber of my palace by my uncle Walter, through fear of my own relations, and conducted to the dwellings and retreats of the poor, that I might escape from discovery by the traitors who sought my death."

This uncle Walter was the brother of his mother, Herleve, who, as well as her father, Fulbert—if such was his name—was taken into the service of Duke Robert as soon as he succeeded to the duchy; but we hear no more of Fulbert the chamberlain, nor of Walter, save that he subscribed the foundation-charter of the Abbey of Fontenay, and had a daughter named Matilda married to Raoul Taisson 2nd. (*Vide* vol. ii. p. 105.)

It would be extremely interesting if we could ascertain the amount of authority Orderic Vital possessed for the long account he makes the Conqueror give of himself on his death-bed, and from which I have made the above quotation. Prone as our ancient chroniclers are to compose orations for the illustrious personages

whose deeds they record, I cannot wholly discredit this "last dying speech and confession" of William the Conqueror. It is just possible that the King might have said "words to that effect," as Orderic phrases it, and that some one in attendance blessed with a good memory may have subsequently written down or repeated them with tolerable fidelity to Orderic himself. At all events, there is nothing in the discourse that is not fairly borne out by contemporary evidence, and, if not veritably an autobiography, has such strong claims on our consideration, that I at first determined to print a translation of it "in extenso;" but the narrative is interlaced with so many long-winded passages of self-accusation, professions of penitence, pious ejaculations, and recitals of what he had done for the Church, that I felt it would be wearisome to the general reader, and therefore I have only cited such portions of it as may throw light upon the incidents of his childhood, or tend to the verification of dates.

The lawful protectors and faithful servants of the young Duke having been slaughtered or poisoned, his authority was set at nought by his turbulent vassals. "The feuds against him were many, and his friends few. Most were ill inclined towards him: even those whom his father loved, he found haughty and evil-disposed. The barons warred upon each other. The

strong oppressed the weak, and he could not prevent it, for he lacked the power to do justice to all. So they burned and pillaged the villages, and robbed the villagers, injuring them in many ways." * Roger de Toeni, a collateral descendant of the line of Rollo, refused all allegiance to the illegitimate grandson of the Furrier of Falaise, and commenced ravaging the lands around him, especially those of Humphrey de Vielles. The spoiler was, however, defeated in a sanguinary combat by Roger de Beaumont, son of Humphrey, and paid for his aggression with his own life and those of two of his sons, Halbert and Elinance.†

A guardian being still needed for the young Duke, a council was summoned, and with William's consent Raoul de Gacé, the murderer of his former guardian, Count Gilbert, was, strange to say, selected to succeed his victim as tutor to the boy, and commander-in-chief of his army. It is fairly presumable that policy alone could have dictated this choice, as in the case of Alain of Brittany it appears "a practical appeal to the honour of a possible rival," ‡ Raoul being a nephew of Richard II., and consequently having claims on the succession.

It is not my intention, as I have already stated, to recapitulate in these pages all the well-known events

* Ord. Vit. † *Ibid.*

‡ Freeman: Norman Conquest.

of this period, which properly belong to the general histories of Normandy and England. It is to the personal acts of the Conqueror I confine myself in this chapter; but in the lives of his companions I shall frequently have to mention many important incidents of his reign in which he was not individually concerned.

We learn from William of Malmesbury that the young Duke was knighted by his liege lord and protector, Henry, King of France, at the earliest period prescribed by the laws of chivalry, which, according to the Council of Constance wherein they are mentioned, appears in the eleventh century to have been the age of twelve—the education for knighthood commencing at seven, and princes being allowed to dispense with the probationary stages of page and squire.

Orderic makes him say, "At the time my father went into voluntary exile, intrusting to me the Duchy of Normandy, I was a mere youth of eight years of age, and from that day to this I have always borne the weight of arms," which accords with the above calculation; and as there is no record of his having visited King Henry within ten years after doing homage to him on the occasion he alluded to, it seems probable that he received the "accolade" on his first appearance in the

field, when, in conjunction with that monarch, he summoned his own Castle of Tillières to surrender, to preserve peace with Henry, who represented it as a standing menace to France. William would have been at that time about twelve years old.

Shortly after this, Turstain, surnamed Goz, who commanded in the Hiemois, raised the standard of rebellion, and had the audacity to garrison the Castle of Falaise itself against the Duke. William, incensed by the personal insult of making his native town the head-quarters of a revolt against him, assembled his forces, and under the guidance of his guardian, Raoul de Gacé, laid siege to the place. A breach was soon made in the outer walls; but night coming on prevented the assault, and before morning Turstain, foreseeing his inability to defend the castle, sought a parley, and was allowed life and liberty on condition of perpetual exile.

As William advanced in age and stature, says Wace, he waxed strong, for he was prudent and took care to protect himself on all sides, and began to display qualities which increased his popularity with his subjects, who felt he was born to rule. The first day he put on armour and vaulted on his destrier (war-horse) without the assistance of the stirrup, was one of rejoicing throughout his dominions. His proficiency

in all military exercises, the soundness of his judgment, his love of justice and his devotion to the Church, are loudly vaunted by his principal panegyrist, Guillaume de Poitiers; but could not reconcile the proud descendants of Rollo to the sway of a base-born boy, whose grandfather had been a tradesman. Guy of Burgundy, son of his aunt Judith, who had been brought up with him from infancy, who had received knighthood at his hands, and to whom he had given Vernon and Brionne, conspired against him with the Viscounts of the Bessin and the Cotentin, offering to share the duchy with them if they would assist him to depose his cousin, whose gifts of a portion of the duchy he evidently considered bribes to induce him to forego his claim to the whole as grandson of Duke Richard II.

The plot was deeply laid, and the Duke's escape almost miraculous. He was passionately fond of hunting, and had been sojourning for some days at Valognes, partly for that pleasure and partly for business. One night, after a good day's sport, when he had dismissed his companions and betaken himself to rest, he was roused "in the season of his first sleep" by his court-fool or jester, Galet or Galot, who, beating the walls with a staff* he wore slung about his

* "Un pel," most probably the staff of his office, a baton with a fool's head, called a bauble.

neck, shouted, "Open! open! open! ye are dead men else: where art thou, William? Wherefore dost thou sleep? Up! up! If thou art found here thou wilt die! Thine enemies are arming around thee! If they find thee here thou wilt never leave the Cotentin, or live till the morning!" William arose hastily, and in nothing but his shirt and drawers, with a capa (short hood and cloak) thrown over his shoulders—not stopping even to look for his spurs—leaped on his horse and rode for his life all night, unattended, as it would seem, by friend or servant, fording the river Vire, by favour of an ebbing tide, and landing safely near the church of St. Clement, in the province of Bayeux; but the city itself was in the hands of his enemies, and he was therefore compelled to avoid it. After a brief halt in the church, and a fervent prayer to God for help in his extremity, he resumed his flight, taking a road between Bayeux and the sea, and just before sunrise reached Rie, where he found the lord of the place, one Hubert, standing at the gate of his own hostel or castle, "scenting the morning air." He was about to pass him when Hubert, recognising his Sovereign in such disorder and with his horse in a foam, exclaimed, "How is it, fair sir, you travel thus?" "Hubert," said the Duke, "dare I trust you?" "Of a truth," answered Hubert, "most assuredly! Speak! and

speak boldly!" "I will have no secrets from you then," said William; "my enemies pursue me, with intent to take my life. I know they have sworn to slay me!" Thereupon the loyal vassal prayed the Duke to alight and enter his castle, while he procured him a good fresh horse; then calling three of his sons, "Mount! mount!" he cried; "behold your lord! Leave him not till you have lodged him safely in Falaise." Then giving them minute instructions as to the road they should take, and warning them to avoid all towns, he bade them God-speed; and after their departure remained upon his bridge (drawbridge) awaiting the arrival of the Duke's pursuers. "He looked out over valley and over hill," says the old Norman poet, "and listened anxiously," but not for long. The conspirators came galloping up, and seeing Hubert they halted, and taking him apart inquired eagerly if he had seen the Bastard pass, and conjured him to tell them which road he had taken. "He passed but now," answered Hubert; "you may soon overtake him; but stay, I will go with you and be your guide, for I should like to strike the first blow at him, and be assured I will if we come up with him." Leading them of course by a totally different route, and by round-about ways, he gave time to William to cross the ford of Folpendant and reach Falaise

—in a sad plight it is true, but, as Wace observes naïvely, "what mattered that so that he was safe?"

There was great alarm the next day, for no one knew what had become of the Duke. The road from Valognes was covered with his fugitive followers, who believed him to have been murdered, or to have perished in his attempt to cross the Vire, and men cursed heartily one Grimoult du Plessis, whom they rightly suspected of being the principal traitor, for having foully made away with his lord.

William, scarcely knowing whom he could trust, and not feeling himself strong enough to attack the rebellious Viscounts, who now openly espoused the cause of Guy of Burgundy and commenced seizing the revenues of the duchy wherever they could lay hands on them, resolved to appeal to the King of France, who had promised his father to protect him, and solicit his assistance to put down the rebellion. He found the King at Poissy. Henry's conduct towards his young liegeman had latterly been anything but friendly. On this occasion, however, either from a qualm of conscience or more probably from a desire to prevent the aggrandisement of the house of Burgundy, he responded favourably and promptly to the appeal, and at the head of a strong force—principally cavalry—marched into

Normandy and formed a junction with the army of the Duke at Val-ès-Dunes between Caen and Argence, in the neighbourhood of which the enemy had taken up their position (A.D. 1047).

Previous to the commencement of the action King Henry observed a body of horse drawn up by themselves at some distance from the rebel forces, and asked the Duke, "Who are they with lances and gonfanons and in rich harness that stand aloof from either powers? Know you anything of their intentions? To which side will they hold when the battle begins?" "Sire," answered William, "I believe to my side, for their leader is Raoul Tesson, who has no cause of quarrel or anger with me."

And so it proved. Raoul Taisson was seigneur de Cingueleiz, and one of the most powerful barons in the country. Although William had given him no cause of offence, he had by some influence been drawn into the conspiracy, and had sworn to smite the Duke wherever he met with him. He had brought with him to the field upwards of one hundred and twenty knights, but at the sight of William he felt some compunction, and delayed joining the rebel forces. The Viscounts made him great promises, but his own knights besought him not to make war upon his liege lord. They represented to him that he could not deny that he was the

Duke's "man." That he had done homage to him before his father and his barons, and that disloyalty to him would render him unworthy of fief and barony. Their remonstrances decided the hesitating Raoul. "You say well, sirs," he answered, "and so shall it be." Then commanding them to stand fast where they were, he spurred across the plain alone, shouting his war-cry, "Tur aie" or "Turie," for there is a curious controversy about it (though, considering he was Lord of *Thury*-en-Cingueleiz, there need be none), and riding up to the Duke laughingly, struck him slightly with his glove, saying, "What I swore to do I have done; I have now acquitted myself of my oath to smite you wherever I found you, and from this time forth I will do you no other wrong or felony." William briefly thanked him, and Raoul rode back to his people. Now this is a very early mention of gloves, which do not appear on the hands of either the civil or military personages in illuminations of the 11th century, or in the Bayeux Tapestry. We know, however, that during the reign of Ethelred (A.D. 979-1016) five pairs of gloves were presented to him by a society of German merchants for the protection of their trade, which is a proof of their great rarity. I have seen two instances of females being represented with a glove or rather muffler on one hand, having a thumb

but no fingers, like the earliest mail gauntlets, which in the 12th century were simply the extremities of the sleeves of the hauberk, out of which the hand could be slipped through an oval opening at the palm. The Norman hauberk, however, at the date of the Battle of Val-ès-Dunes, had no such terminations—the sleeves being loose and not reaching even to the wrists, sometimes barely to the elbow. The hands of the warriors in the Bayeux Tapestry (a work of some twenty or thirty years later) are all bare, even when they carry hawks, and the Norman poet has in more than one instance introduced the fashions of his own time in his graphic descriptions. I do not throw any doubt upon the incident, but simply question the instrument, as such statements are too often inconsiderately quoted as proofs of the existence of a fashion or article of attire at a period much earlier than there is any authority for placing it. Some nineteen years later we hear again of gloves, those of Conan Duke of Brittany having been poisoned most conveniently for the Conqueror, when he was preparing for the descent upon England.

Their use at that period may from their rarity have been limited to princely and noble personages, but the absence of them in the Bayeux Tapestry is too remarkable to be passed without notice.

Pardon, therefore, kind reader, this digression. We will return to the battle.

The fight commenced. On one side the shout arose of "Montjoie!" the war-cry of the French, and "Dex aie!" (God aid), which was that of Normandy, answered by Renouf de Bricasard with "Saint Sever! Sire Saint Sever!" and by Hamon-aux-Dents with "Saint Amant! Sire Saint Amant!" William, for the first time in hand-to-hand combat, made desperate efforts to reach the perjured Viscounts, who were pointed out to him, but he does not appear to have been able to close with them. Encountering, however, one of Renouf's vassals named Hardé, a native of Bayeux, and renowned for his prowess, he drove his sword into his throat, where it was unprotected by armour, and Hardé fell from his horse dead.

King Henry fought bravely, but had not fared so well. Twice, if not thrice, he had been unhorsed and in great peril. The first time by a nameless knight of the Cotentin—a circumstance long commemorated in a popular rhyme :—

> "From Cotentin came the lance
> Which unhorsed the King of France,"

and a second time by Hamon-aux-Dents, Lord of Thorigny, Maissi, and Creulli; but both paid with

their lives for the honour of the deed. The unknown knight being unhorsed in turn by one of the king's followers, and trampled to death by the heavy horses of the French cavalry, and Hamon-with-the-Teeth in like manner mortally wounded and carried off dead on his shield to Esquai, where they buried him in front of the church.*

Raoul Taisson had remained aloof and stationary till after the first shock of the contending armies, then, at the head of his company, dashed into the mêlée on William's side, and fought gallantly against the rebels. "I know not how to recount his high deeds," says the chronicler, "nor how many he overthrew that day."

A panic seized the Viscount of the Bessin, and throwing away his lance and shield, he fled for his life "with outstretched neck," as Wace graphically describes it, followed by the most faint-hearted of his people. Neel de Saint-Sauveur, Viscount of the Cotentin, called for his valour and high bearing "Noble Chef de Faucon," still bravely contended against increasing odds; but at length, exhausted by his exertions, and seeing the struggle hopeless, reluctantly and regretfully quitted the field, and the rout became

* Rom. de Rou. The "Chronique de Normandie" gives to Guillesen, the uncle of Hamon, the honour of having first unhorsed the King

general. Such numbers were driven into the river Orne, where they were either drowned or killed by their pursuers, that the mills of Borbillion are said to have been stopped by the dead bodies.

Wace, whom I have followed almost verbatim in this account of the Duke's first general action, says nothing of the part taken therein by the principal mover of the rebellion, Guy of Burgundy, nor by the arch-traitor Grimoult du Plessis, only that the former fled to Brionne, hotly pursued by William, where in his castle he sustained a siege for three years. He was eventually forced to surrender all the lands the Duke had given him in Normandy, and subsequently retired to his native country, while Grimoult was seized and imprisoned at Rouen, where he confessed his felonious attempt on the Duke's life at Valognes, accusing as an accomplice a knight named Salle, the son of Huon. Salle challenged Grimoult to a trial by battle, and a day was appointed for the combat; but in the morning Grimoult was found dead in his dungeon, and was buried in his fetters.

The victory of Val-ès-Dunes greatly increased the power and popularity of the Duke of Normandy, now of full age and approved valour and ability. He had very shortly an opportunity of returning the obliga-

tions he was under to the French king for the ready and important assistance he had rendered to him in the suppression of that serious rebellion.

A war had broken out between King Henry and Geoffrey Martel, Count of Anjou, and William marched with a powerful force to the aid of his suzeraine. So daring, we are told, was his conduct, and so brilliant the feats of arms which distinguished him in this expedition, though they are not particularized, that he was highly lauded by the king, who nevertheless cautioned him against the extreme rashness with which he exposed his valuable life.

The Count of Anjou revenged himself by marching into Normandy and occupying and garrisoning Alençon, one of the Duke's border fortresses. William in turn entered the state of Maine, of which Geoffrey was now virtually the sovereign, in the capacity of guardian of its Count Hugh, who was a minor, and besieged Domfront. But treason still lurked about the Norman prince. Intelligence was conveyed to the Angevine commander in Domfront, by some Norman noble unnamed, that William had left the main body of his army on a foraging expedition, attended by only fifty men-at-arms, and the direction he had taken. Three hundred horse and seven hundred foot were immediately despatched to intercept and capture him. There

can be no doubt that the numbers are greatly exaggerated, but it may be perfectly true that William, with his fifty followers, put to flight a formidable force, pursuing them to the very gates of the town, and taking one prisoner with his own hand.

William of Poitiers, the contemporary biographer and enthusiastic panegyrist of "the Conqueror," who had thus early begun to deserve that title, tells also a story connected with this siege of Domfront, which is probable enough, and too characteristic of the manners of the age to be omitted, were it only "ben trovato."

Tidings having been brought to the Duke that the Count of Anjou was on his march with a considerable force to raise the siege, he despatched Roger de Montgomeri and William, son of that Osbern the Dapifer who was murdered at Vaudreuil, with, according to Wace's version, a third knight named William, the son of Thierry, to meet Geoffrey and demand an explanation of his conduct. The Count informed them that it was his intention to be before Domfront the next morning, where he would meet the Duke, and, that William might recognize him, he would be on a white horse and bear a gilded shield. The envoys answered that he need not give himself the trouble to travel so far. William would meet him on the road in the morning, armed and mounted in such wise as they

described to him. William kept his word; but the Count appears to have thought better of it, and had retreated before daybreak, to the great disappointment of the Normans.

It is singular that this story should have been quoted some years ago to prove that heraldic insignia were known and borne in the eleventh century, when the evidence it affords us is exactly to the contrary. Had such personal distinctions existed at that period, "the Normans," as Mr. Freeman has justly observed, "could hardly have needed to be told what kind of shield Geoffrey would carry."

Leaving a sufficient force before Domfront, William marched suddenly by night upon Alençon, his own disloyal town, which had opened its gates to his enemy. The hostile garrison here insulted the Duke by hanging out skins or furs, and shouting "La Pel! La Pel al parmentier!" which, as I have already observed, was twitting him with his maternal descent from a tailor.

Stung to the quick, the grandson of the tailor swore, "by the splendour of God,"—his habitual oath,—that the limbs of men who had so mocked him should be lopped like the branches of a tree; and he kept his cruel oath. He took the town by assault, and two-and-thirty of the defenders had their hands and feet

cut off, and cast over the castle walls, as a terrible warning to those who still held the castle. It was not in vain. The garrison surrendered, on condition that their lives and limbs should be spared. Hurrying back to Domfront, whither the tidings of the fate of Alençon had preceded him, he received the almost immediate submission of that fortress, the garrison only stipulating for the retention of their weapons as well as their limbs. Domfront became a border fortress of Normandy, in addition to Alençon on the southern frontier of the duchy; and William, after marching triumphantly through Maine, and fortifying the Castle of Ambrières, returned, covered with laurels, to Rouen.

Flushed with conquest, and feeling secure for the first time of his paternal dominions, the Duke of Normandy, at the urgent request of his councillors, looked about him for a wife, and appears as early as 1049 to have made overtures for the hand of Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders; for at the Council of Rheims, held on the 1st of October in that year, the marriage was prohibited. The whole story of Matilda's early life, of her indignant rejection and subsequent acceptance of the hand of William of Normandy, because, forsooth, she thought he must be a man of great courage and high daring who could

venture to come and beat her in her father's own palace,* is so involved in mystery that a volume might be written on this subject alone. Is there any truth whatever in the popular story of her brutal treatment by William? Which of the versions, if any, is to be trusted; and if there be the least foundation for it, when did the outrage, unpardonable under any circumstances, take place? Matilda, it is evident by her resentment of another's refusal of herself, and her vindictive conduct towards the culprit when she had become Queen of England, was not of a forgiving nature. Could such a woman ever have lived upon such terms of affection as we are told she did with a husband, who, regardless of her sex and her rank, had publicly insulted and assaulted her, as not even, in that still barbarous age, the lowest ruffian in his senses would have done? What was her offence? She, the grand-daughter of a king of France, legitimately descended on both sides from the greatest sovereigns in Europe, had naturally objected to become the wife of the base-born grandson of a tradesman of Falaise. Supposing this part of the story to be true, which has at least probability in its favour, can it be believed that when William, some time after his offer had been courteously declined by Count Baldwin, learned by

* Badouin d'Avennes.

report the reason Matilda had given for her refusal, that even allowing for the violence of his temper and the ferocity of his nature as evidenced by his savage punishment of those who had insulted him at Alençon, would have travelled from Normandy to Lille in Flanders, forced his way into the chamber of the Count's daughter, dragged her about it by her hair, and, dashing her on the floor, spurned and trampled upon her as she lay at his feet?—or, according to another account, intercepted her on her way home from church at Bruges, and brutally beat her and wounded her with his *spurs?* The spurs of that day, be it remembered, were not rowelled, but made with one spear-shaped point, which might have inflicted on a female a mortal wound! As indeed he is stated, with equal *truth*, to have done on a later occasion, when irritated at being detained by Matilda after he had mounted his horse, he struck at her with his heel so that the spur ran into her breast and she died!—some seventeen years before she did die.

Another story of her death having been caused by his cruelty towards her, will be told in its proper place. Here I have only to repeat that such a "courtship," despite the slanderous old proverb—

> "A woman, a spaniel, and a walnut-tree,
> The more you beat them the better they be,"

could never have been forgiven by such a woman as Matilda of Flanders. Prudence, however, might have counselled the submission both of father and daughter under some circumstances; and I shall return to this subject in my investigation of another mystery connected with this highly eulogized lady, observing only that the consent of both father and daughter must have been obtained in 1049, or the papal inhibition would have been unnecessary.

In 1051 William visited England, accompanied by an imposing retinue, and was received with great honour and affection by King Edward the Confessor. It was at this period some promise was apparently given to the Duke of Normandy respecting the succession to the English throne, though the precise fact has never been successfully established.

William returned to Normandy only to find his rights again disputed and his rule defied by members of his own family. After suppressing a revolt by William, surnamed Busac, the son of the half-brother of his grandfather, Duke Richard "the Good," and banishing him from Normandy, a serious conspiracy and most alarming coalition demanded the exercise of all his courage and ability. Secretly instigated by his uncle, Malger, Archbishop of Rouen, and openly abetted by Henry, King of France, alternately the friend and foe

of his valorous vassal; William of Arques, Count of Talou, brother of the primate, raised the standard of rebellion against his nephew and liege lord in 1053, claiming the duchy as the legitimate son of Richard II. The Duke was again at Valognes when this new outbreak was reported to him. With his usual promptitude he immediately took horse, and outstripping his small escort reached Arques with only six followers. Fortunately, however, he encountered in its neighbourhood a force comprising three hundred knights, who had marched of their own accord from Rouen on receipt of the tidings. William, undismayed by their report of the strength of the enemy, exclaimed "They will fly at my sight!" and perceiving, as he spoke, the Count returning to the castle from some expedition at the head of a considerable body of troops, he at once set spurs to his horse, and galloping up the hill with his few hundred followers charged the rebels so furiously that they speedily gave way and fled for safety into the fortress, pursued to the very gates by the Duke, who but for the rapidity with which they were closed against him would have entered with the runaways and crushed the revolt at a blow.

My narrative being limited to an account of the personal sayings and doings ("les Gestes et Faictes," as the old chroniclers call them) of the Conqueror, I

leave the subsequent siege and surrender of Arques, the banishment of the Count of Talou, and temporary pacification of the duchy to the historians of Normandy. The gallant exploit above recorded is the only one I have found related of the Duke in connection with this rebellion.

During the brief lull that succeeded this storm, the marriage of William and Matilda appears to have taken place, whether in defiance of the pontifical inhibition or after its removal is not quite clear; neither are the grounds on which it was issued, though generally understood to have been nearness of kin. It is remarkable, however, that Pope Leo IX., who prohibited the marriage, was at this moment a captive in the power of the Normans at Benevento, and his authority might have been set at nought or a dispensation extorted from him. At all events, Count Baldwin conducted his daughter to Eu in Normandy, where the long-delayed and forbidden marriage was celebrated, and the fair Duchess of Normandy thence proceeded with her husband to Rouen, where they were received with every demonstration of joy.

The treacherous and dissolute Archbishop Malger, in an extraordinary fit of virtuous indignation, excommunicated the newly married pair for having dared to disobey the commands of the Church. It does not

appear, however, to have much affected the illustrious culprits. Nevertheless, Duke William did not forget it when two years later he was called upon to pronounce sentence on his unworthy uncle, found guilty in solemn council at Lisieux of all kinds of crimes and offences, including, of course, the study and practice of the black art. He deposed him from his see, and banished him to the Channel Islands, "where," says Wace, "he led the life that best pleased him." Magic or witchcraft formed generally one of the "counts in the indictment" of any criminal in that age of ignorance and gross superstition, and he was accused of having "a private devil" on his establishment ("un deable privé"), whom many had heard speak, but no one had ever seen. This familiar spirit was named "Toret," or "Toiret," which Monsieur Pluquet says is the diminutive of Thor, or Thur, the Scandinavian deity; while Sir Francis Palgrave contends it is pure high Dutch, and simply signifies Folly. (Query: If the cards called Torot, and used by the gipsies in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to tell fortunes with, derived their appellation from the same root, whichever it may be?)

Whether or not the ex-primate was indebted to this invisible friend for the information he communicated to his boatmen when sailing, during his exile, off the

French coast, is not recorded; but he warned them to be careful, as he knew for certain that one of the persons on board would die that day, though he could not say which, nor from what cause. They listened to him, but thought no more about it. It was summer, the day was hot, and Malger was seated near the rudder, without his drawers or hose. They were just entering some port, when, suddenly rising or changing his position, his feet became entangled in his clothes, and he fell overboard, head foremost. His body was found, after some search, between two rocks, and carried to Cherbourg, where he was buried.

To return, however, to the Conqueror. But a few months of domestic peace were allowed him. A new and formidable league was entered into against him by his old enemy, the Count of Anjou, and his old friend, the jealous and capricious King of France. The Duke of Normandy was his vassal, but was becoming so powerful that he might one day be his master, or, at least, an independent sovereign and dangerous neighbour. In 1054 the hostile army entered the duchy in two divisions. The left, under the command of the King himself, marching by Mantes, to attack Evreux and Rouen; the right, by Aumale, to Mortemer, a spot now celebrated as the scene of one of the fiercest conflicts of the eleventh century, terminating in the

complete defeat and destruction of this portion of the invading army, so many prisoners being taken that there was not a prison in all Normandy which was not full of Frenchmen. The principal details of the battle of Mortemer will be found in subsequent chapters, devoted to some who were leaders in the victorious army. William was encamped meanwhile on one bank of the Seine, watching the French King, who had taken up a position on the other. The joyful tidings were quickly communicated to him, and, after thanking God "with clasped hands and tears in his eyes," he determined to send to King Henry the news of the battle himself, but in so mysterious a manner that it should increase his dismay and distress.

The device appears to us now as absurdly childish, but it seems to have produced the desired effect. A messenger, Ralph de Toeni (as Orderic makes William himself tell us), the grandson of that Roger who was one of the first to refuse allegiance to William in his childhood, was intrusted with its execution.

In the dead of the night he approached the royal quarters, and climbing a tree, or, according to others, mounting some eminence, overhanging the King's tent, he shouted, "Frenchmen! Frenchmen! arise, arise! Prepare for flight — ye sleep too long! Away,

and bury your friends who have been slain at Mortemer!"

The King, who heard this cry, was greatly alarmed and astonished. No attempt appears to have been made to capture the audacious bearer of this terrible intelligence, but an inquiry was made throughout the camp to ascertain whether any one had heard a rumour of such a disaster having befallen the other division of the army. While the King was in consultation with his officers, fugitives from the field of battle arrived and confirmed the fatal news. The French, panic struck, decamped with all speed, setting fire to their tents and huts, and with the King made the best of their way homeward. The Duke, always careful to preserve an appearance of respect for his feudal obligations, declined to pursue him, saying, "Let him go; he has had quite enough to trouble and cross him."

True, for the time he had, but not sufficient to make him wiser for the future. He had made a truce with William, and pledged himself not to interfere again in any quarrel between the Duke and his implacable enemy, Geoffrey Martel; nevertheless, he declared that he would sooner perjure himself than not have his revenge for the battle of Mortemer. In the following August, while the corn was yet standing, he burst once more into Normandy, ravaging the Hiemois and

overrunning the whole country of the Bessin as far as the sea, burning the towns and villages, and plundering the inhabitants without mercy.

The news of this sudden and unprovoked inroad reached the Duke at Falaise, and grieved him sorely. He called to arms all the forces in his dominions, even the countrymen ("villeins," as they are termed in the language of that day), and who responded to the call loyally with pikes and clubs and any weapons they could arm themselves with. It was, in fact, a *levée en masse* to repel an invader. But the policy of the Duke was not to give battle to the enemy on their first entrance into his dominions, but to bide his time, and fall on them when least expected on their return. He contented himself with strengthening and garrisoning all his castles and fortified places, and waited patiently till, laden with plunder and flushed with the success of their unopposed march through one half of the country, they at length faced about, and were preparing to cross the river Dive to carry fire and sword into the other half. Duke William, who had received most accurate information of every step the marauders had taken or intended to take, led his forces through the valley of Bavent, unperceived by the enemy, and as soon as his feudal lord, the King and the vanguard of his army had

crossed the river at Varaville, rushed upon the rear-guard and the long train of baggage-waggons which were slowly following the main body. "Then," says Wace, "began a fierce *mêlée*—many blows of spears and swords. The knights charged with their lances, the archers shot with their bows, and the 'villeins' laid about them with their iron-shod staves, driving the French along the causeway, which was long and in bad repair, and they being encumbered by their plunder, and consequently impeded in their progress, broke their ranks and were thrown into utter confusion. The great press was at the bridge, which, being old, gave way under the weight of the crowd and the force of a remarkably high tide, and fell in with all that were upon it. In every direction armour was to be seen floating and men plunging and sinking, none but good swimmers having a chance of life. Cries of despair arose from the numbers who by the fall of the bridge were left without means of escape. They rushed along the bank of the river, seeking for fords and flinging away their arms and booty, cursing themselves for having taken it, the Normans pursuing and sparing none, till all who had not crossed the bridge were drowned, slain, or made prisoners. From the height of Bastebourg the King looked down on Varaville and Cabourg. He saw the marshes and the valleys which lay

stretched out before him, the swollen river, and the broken bridge. He marked the struggles of his soldiers, the numbers seized and bound or struggling in the water. He could help or save none. He was speechless with sorrow and indignation; his limbs trembled, his face burned with rage. With a heavy heart he returned to France, and never again bore shield or spear"—"whether as penance or not," adds the poet, "I do not know." Henry was, in fact, advanced in age at this time, and died two years after his return to Paris.

Mr. Freeman remarks that Wace is the only author who mentions a bridge, Benoît de Sainte-More and others only speaking of a ford. He therefore considers that Wace is in error, and describes the locality as it was in his time. It may be so, but I cannot hold that the argument is conclusive without some evidence to show that there was no old wooden bridge existing at the date of the battle of Varaville. The breaking of the bridge appears to me like a piece of local information, and the unusual rising of the tide which he relies upon would assist in its destruction as well as render the fords impassable. The Prebend of Bayeux is more to be trusted on such a point than any other chronicler.

About this time, also, that arch-disturber of every

neighbour's peace, Geoffrey Martel, of whose intrigues we hear so much, and of his personal prowess so little, passed away, and Duke William was relieved from the ceaseless machinations and maraudings of two powerful enemies.

William's acquisition of the county of Maine, partly by bequest and partly by force of arms, curiously as it illustrates his crafty policy more fully developed in his subsequent conquest of England, is another portion of the history of Normandy, the details of which belong to the annalist rather than the biographer. I shall only refer hereafter to two circumstances in connection with it, one of which affects the Conqueror's family, and the other some of his followers.

We have now arrived at the date of Harold's appearance in Normandy; and here again, beyond the well-known facts of his being driven on the coast of Ponthieu, imprisoned by its Count Wido (Guy), and released at the instance of the Duke of the Normans, of his oath on the relics, and his promise to marry one of William's daughters, all of which have been told over and over in every history of England, we are left on several points in utter ignorance, both as to motives and circumstances, which might have had a most important influence on the events recorded.

Three different versions of Harold's voyage are

given, having no agreement with each other beyond the fact of his having sailed from Bosham in Sussex, and by accident or mistake landed in the dominions of Count Wido. That curious relic, the Bayeux Tapestry, which minutely represents his embarkation, supports, I think, the statement of William of Malmesbury, that Harold was simply bent on a sporting expedition, and had no mission to Normandy or any intention of visiting its duke, but was driven by contrary winds on the coast of Ponthieu, where, according to the barbarous custom, not specially of that country, but of the whole coast from Brittany to Flanders, called "the law of Langan," he was seized and imprisoned for the sake of ransom. Not only on this point, but on nearly all the principal circumstances connected with Harold's sojourn in Normandy, such contradictory statements are confidently made by the only writers who could possibly have known anything of the facts, that we in the nineteenth century can really place no reliance on the details with which any one of them has furnished us; and the nature of this work forbids a critical examination, which could only result in the expression of an individual opinion as to probabilities, and neither conclusively settle a single question in debate nor have any interest for the general reader. The expedition to Brittany, in which Harold accompanied Duke

William, does not appear to have been signalised by any personal exploit. The time and place wherein the Duke gave arms to Harold, and Harold is asserted to have taken an oath of some description to him, are variously recorded, and we have nothing certain in the way of stirring incident till we arrive at the memorable year 1066 and the invasion of England.

Wace graphically describes the effect produced on William by the tidings of the death of King Edward the Confessor, and the assumption of the crown by Harold. The Duke was hunting in the park of Quevily, near Rouen. He had his bow in his hand, which he had just bent, when "a sergeant" (man-at-arms), who had come from England, approached him and imparted to him privately the news. He immediately quitted the park in great anger, impatiently untying and tying repeatedly the laces or cords of his mantle. He spoke to no man, and no man ventured to speak to him. Crossing the Seine in a boat, he entered his palace and sat down moodily on a bench in the hall, covering his face with his cloak and leaning his head against a column, restlessly turning himself from one side to the other. His attendants wondered what ailed him, and inquired anxiously of his seneschal, William of Breteuil, who entered the hall "humming a tune," —a trait of character which curiously reminds us of

the whistling of an eminent personage at a critical moment of the late siege of Paris,—if he could explain the cause of their master's emotion. The Duke looking up, "the bold son of Osbern" told him that it was useless to attempt concealing the news he had heard, for it had already spread throughout the city, and was known to every man in Rouen; that instead of mourning he should up and be doing, cross the sea and dethrone the usurper.

We may pretty well be assured that the Duke had come to that determination in his own mind already, and required no prompting from any one.

After a select council, which was attended by the chief men in the duchy, including William's half-brothers Odo and Robert and Eudo al Chapel who had married the Duke's half-sister Muriel, a general one was called at Lillebonne. The Duke laid his case before them, and notwithstanding the hesitation of some and the actual dissent of others, the personal influence of the prince prevailed, and the promise of each baron to provide a certain number of ships and soldiers was, there and then, entered in a book. Of these barons and their contingents, their deeds and their fate, I have to speak separately, and in lieu of a repetition of the often-told tales of the muster at the mouth of the Dive, the landing at Pevensey, and the decisive battle

of Hastings, I shall select from the general account such incidents only as are strictly connected with the person of the Conqueror, to whom this chapter is dedicated.

In the "Mora," the splendid ship said to have been presented to him by his duchess, favoured by a south wind, for which he had waited long and anxiously, first beside the Dive and secondly at St. Valery, piloted by Stephen the son of Airard, the Duke of Normandy led his enormous fleet—enormous taking it even at the lowest calculation, which, according to Wace, who says he heard it from his father, was nearly seven hundred sail—from the confluence of the Somme to the coast of Sussex, and on the morning of Thursday, 28th of September, cast anchor, and the whole army immediately disembarked in good order and without the slightest opposition.

Old and well-worn as the story is, I must not omit it. William, in descending from his ship, missed his footing and fell full length upon the sand. Anticipating the effect of such an evil omen on his superstitious followers, he exclaimed, "By the splendour of God, I have taken seisin of England!—I hold its earth in my hands!" Hearing which a soldier pulled a piece of thatch from a cottage on the beach, and offered it to the Duke as seisin not only of the land, but of all it

contained. "I accept it," said William, "and may God be with me!"

Wace tells us that two vessels foundered, it might be from overlading. In one of them was lost a clerk, who was supposed to possess the gift of prophecy, and had declared that William's voyage would be prosperous, and that Harold would yield to him without a blow. "A poor prophet was he," observed the Duke, when he heard of his being drowned, "who could not foretell the time and cause of his own death. Weak would be the man who believed in the predictions of such an astrologer."

On the morning of Saturday, the 14th of October, the Duke, having heard mass and received the Communion, advanced with his whole army from Hastings to Telham Hill, whence they could observe the English forces encamped on the rising ground, called by Orderic, Senlac.*

* Notwithstanding the protest of Mr. M. A. Lower, I have kept the name given by Orderic to the site of the present village of Battle, as it must have been so called in his time; and the tradition recorded by William of Neuburgh, that "on the spot where the greatest slaughter was made there exuded after every gentle shower real, and as it were recent, blood—as though the voice of so much Christian gore shed by the hands of Christian brethren still cried to the Lord from the ground that had drunk it in," certainly favours the derivation of the word from Sanguelac, the origin of the tradition being evidently the redness of the chalybeate springs in that locality, which still retains in the various forms of "Saint lake," "Saint lache," "The lake," and "Battle lake," some memory of the name given to it by the Normans.

At Telham, or Hetheland, as it was then called, another well-known incident occurred. In putting on his hauberk William, or his armour-bearer, mistook the back of it for the front. As in the case of his fall on the sands, he quickly and cleverly represented the omen as one of happy import, and laughingly reassured his alarmed attendants by declaring it to be a sign that from a duke he should be turned into a king. Mounting a noble Spanish war-horse, which Walter Giffard, Lord of Longueville, had brought to him as a present from a king who highly esteemed him, William rode to the head of his forces, and learning from an officer, who had been sent to reconnoitre the enemy, that Harold's standard was planted on the summit of the hill facing him, vowed that, if God gave him the victory, he would build a monastery to His honour on the spot where that standard was now waving. A monk of Marmoutier, who heard him, requested the monastery should be dedicated to St. Martin of Tours, and William signified his assent thereto.

I have previously stated that I would not fight the battle of Hastings over again. There is scarcely any conflict recorded in English history the general features of which are so familiar to all of us, and nothing specially new in the details has been discovered by recent writers. The ground has been gone over, lite-

rally as well as figuratively, foot by foot, by the local historian, Mr. Mark Anthony Lower, and by the latest narrator of the Norman Conquest, Mr. Edward Freeman, both of whom have laboured assiduously and successfully in the work of identification of places, and minute topographical description of the principal positions occupied by the rival hosts. My business is solely with the personal exploits performed on them, and I shall therefore have to refer frequently to the battle in my separate notices of the most celebrated leaders of the invading army, restricting myself in this chapter to those of the Conqueror only. In the Bayeux Tapestry we behold him armed in his hauberk, which was not the coat of chain mail of the thirteenth century, but the *geringhed byrnie* of the eleventh and twelfth, consisting of iron rings, not linked together and forming a garment of themselves, but sewn or strongly fastened flat upon a tunic of leather or of quilted linen, buckram, canvas, or some strong material descending to the mid-leg, and which, being open in the skirts both before and behind for convenience in riding, gave it the appearance of a jacket with short breeches attached to it, if, indeed, such was not actually the case in some instances. The sleeves were loose, and reached only just below the elbow. The legs were defended simply by bands of leather bound

round the hose crosswise. The helmet was sharply conical, with a back-piece to protect the neck, and a single bar in front defending the nose. William is depicted in the Tapestry lifting his helmet by this nasal, in order to reassure his soldiers, a report of his being killed having caused them to waver at a critical moment of the combat. "Behold me," he exclaimed; "I live, and by God's grace I will conquer." *

Armed with lance and mace, or rather war-club, the latter slung, as we find in another instance, at his saddle-bow, bearing his long, kite-shaped shield, and bestriding his noble Spanish steed, the Duke of the Normans no doubt deserved the eulogy of Haimon, Viscount of Thouars, who declared a warrior so well armed had never been seen under heaven, and that the noble Count would be a noble king.

Thus armed and equipped, and with the relics round his neck on which Harold is reported to have sworn, William sought the Saxon king as eagerly as at Valès-Dunes he had sought the rebel viscounts, Renouf and Neel, and similarly in vain. He was intercepted

* Benoît says—

"Son chef désarma en la battaille
E del heaume et de la ventaille."

By ventaille (*avant-taille*) he must mean the nasal, as there appears no other protection for the face until some time after the Conquest, when a great variety of ventailles were introduced.

by Harold's brother Gurth, who, casting a javelin at him, killed his horse. The rider fell with it, but, unwounded himself, was on his feet in an instant, and rushing at Gurth, felled him with one blow of his terrible club.

He then summoned a knight of Maine to dismount and give him his horse. The knight disloyally refused to assist his sovereign. The Duke, incensed at his conduct, unseated him by force, and mounting the horse returned to the charge. This second horse was also killed under him by a Saxon, who is described by a writer, supposed to be Guy, Bishop of Amiens, as "filius Hellocis" (the son of Hello or Helloc?), and who shared the same fate as Gurth. Count Eustace of Boulogne then offered his horse to the Duke, and again he plunged into the thickest of the fight. A blow from a Saxon axe beat in his helmet and nearly unhorsed him; a spear-thrust he parried, and slew the assailant.

These are the particular deeds recorded of him, and we may fairly give him credit for many others, without believing the astounding assertion of the supposed Guy of Amiens, that William killed during that day two thousand Saxons with his own hand!

On the spot where Harold had fallen—his brain pierced through the eye by a chance arrow—where

the standards of "the Dragon" and "the Fighting-Man" had been so gallantly defended—under the branches it may be of "the ancient apple-tree" which gave the first name to the battle—a space was cleared of the thickly-heaped dead, the standard of the Normans planted, and the tent of the Conqueror pitched for the night. There, after he had thanked God for giving him the victory, food and wine were brought to him. He was divested of his armour, and his shield and helmet, battered by many blows, were shown to the surrounding soldiers, who with shouts compared him to all the paladins of Charlemagne; and there William, despite the remonstrances of Walter Giffard, feasted and slept amidst the piles of the dead and the groans of the dying! A butcher supping in his reeking slaughter-house might equally excite our disgust, but his hands would at least be unstained with the blood of his fellow-creatures.

It is not my intention to follow the Conqueror step by step through his devastating progress towards London, nor does it accord with the plan of this work to enter into the details of the general political events of the reign of the first Norman King of England. I pass over, for the present, his coronation, with its attendant tumult and firing of houses by his savage soldiery, his visit to Normandy in 1067, and that of

Matilda to England the following year. Of the various revolts and conspiracies against him I shall have to speak in my sketches of the principal actors in them. I shall also have occasion to refer in them to other of his expeditions to Normandy and his campaigns in the north of England, where he "made a wilderness, and called it peace," a quotation I admit worn thread-bare, but never more applicable than to the subjugator of England.

I hasten at once to the period when the star of William began to pale, when victory no longer waited on his standard, and domestic discords added to the bitterness of defeat.

His eldest son, Robert, whom he had formerly associated with his mother in the government of Normandy, and subsequently named as his successor to that duchy, was excited to rebellion by the state of poverty and dependence in which he was kept by his suspicious and avaricious father. He claimed immediate possession of Normandy and Maine, and a share of the realm of England.

To the King's remonstrances and lectures, he answered petulantly, that he did not come to hear sermons, of which he had heard enough from the tutors who taught him grammar; and on William's peremptory refusal to grant his requests retired in dudgeon,

and shortly afterwards, incensed by an ill-timed frolic of his younger brothers, William and Henry, who threw some water upon him from an upper story of a house in which they were playing at dice, he broke out into open rebellion, and with a small band of adherents, made an unsuccessful attempt to seize the Castle of Rouen.

Matilda's secret support of this disobedient son, to whom she sent large supplies of money and jewels, caused serious quarrels between her and her husband. This rash, ungovernable young man, whose personal appearance was far from prepossessing—as he is described by contemporary writers as heavy-faced, corpulent, and with legs so short and devoid of symmetry that his father gave him the name of Gambaron, in other words, Court-heuse—was his mother's favourite. She is reported to have declared that were he dead and buried, she would gladly give her own life to resuscitate him.

Robert, supported by Philip, King of France, was besieged in the Castle of Gerberoi by William in person, and in a sally, the Conqueror received from his own son the first wound he had ever met with in all the battles he had fought. Of this personal encounter there are as many different versions as there are narrators. The most popular is, that Robert was

unconscious of the person he had wounded and unhorsed until the King's voice revealed the startling fact, when he immediately dismounted, and expressing his contrition and imploring pardon for his unintentional crime, placed him on his own horse and led him safely from the field. One writer says William's fury was so great that he heaped curses on his son's head, which no entreaties could ever induce him to revoke. Another, in flat contradiction, asserts that he was so touched by the respect and remorse of Robert that he forgave him on the spot, and thenceforth held him in great esteem.

That some sort of family reconciliation did take place appears evident from a charter granted in 1082 by William and his Queen to the Church of the Holy Trinity at Caen, to which are affixed the signatures of the three sons—Robert, William, and Henry. This charter is also remarkable for the fact that, amongst the lands granted to the church is Nailsworth in Gloucestershire, which was part of the manor of Michinhampton, previously held by Brihtric Meaw, whom Matilda had so unjustly deprived of all his estates in revenge for his having slighted her early affection. "Hell hath no fury like a woman foiled," says an old dramatist, and this still mysterious story might be adduced in support of the assertion. I shall have to recur to it hereafter.

On the 2nd of November, 1083, Queen Matilda died, after a lingering illness, at Caen, in Normandy, and was buried in the church of her own foundation. A story was circulated in the reign of her son, Henry I., concerning the immediate cause of her decease, which may be classed with that of her wooing by William. Matilda is reported to have discovered an intrigue between her husband and the daughter of a priest, and in her jealousy had the girl ham-strung, which so exasperated William that he beat her, or caused her to be beaten to death with a horse's bridle.*

Four years afterwards William himself followed her to the grave. Is it necessary to recapitulate the oft-repeated story of the coarse jest of Philip, King of France, on the increasing corpulence of the Conqueror, of William's furious retort, of his burning of Mantes, the stumbling of his steed on the hot embers and consequent fatal injury of the rider?

He was borne on a litter to Rouen. But the noise of the city was too great for him, and by his own directions he was conveyed to the Priory attached to the Church of St. Gervaise, standing on a hill to the west of the town. There, attended by Gilbert Maminot, Bishop of Lisieux, Guntred, Abbot of Jumiéges, and others

* William of Malmesbury, Book III.

well skilled in medicine, he lingered some six or seven weeks, and then conscience-stricken on the approach of death, he is said to have uttered that remarkable "discourse" which I have alluded to, and quoted from in the early part of the chapter, wherein he confesses himself to have been the barbarous murderer of many thousands, both old and young, and tremblingly recounts, as a set-off, that he has erected and endowed seventeen convents of monks and six of nuns during his government of Normandy.

He had already given that duchy to his eldest son Robert, a grant which he seems to have regretted, but could not amend. "I know for certain," he observed, "that the country which is subject to his dominion will be truly wretched. He is a proud and silly prodigal, and will have long to suffer severe misfortune"—a singular proof of "the great esteem" in which the King held his son after the affair at Gerberoi! "I appoint no one my heir to the Crown of England," he continued, "for I did not attain that high honour by hereditary right, but I wrested it from the perjured King Harold, in a desperate battle, with much effusion of human blood, and it was by the slaughter and banishment of his adherents that I subjugated England to my rule." He expressed, however, a hope that his son William, who from his earliest years had been

always attached to him, would succeed to the throne, and enjoy a prosperous reign.

"And what do you give me, my father?" exclaimed Henry, his youngest surviving son. "Five thousand pounds of silver from my treasury," replied the King. "But what shall I do with this money, having no corner of the earth which I can call my own?" rejoined the young Prince. "My son," said the dying Monarch, "be contented with your lot, and trust in the Lord. Suffer patiently your elder brothers to precede you. Robert will have Normandy, and William England; but you will in turn succeed to all the dominions which belong to me, and you will surpass your brothers in wealth and power." This prophetic declaration throws a little doubt upon the authenticity of this otherwise most interesting narrative. Orderic out-lived King Henry I.; and the seventh book, in which the above discourse appears, was written after that monarch's death, when the prediction had been fulfilled or might be safely invented. Nevertheless, words are put into William's mouth which deserve consideration, and those whom it may concern are referred to the following chapter. On Thursday, 9th of September, at sunrise, the King, awaking from a tranquil sleep, heard the sound of the great bell of the Cathedral of Rouen, and inquiring the cause, was told by the attendants that it was tolling

for primes in the Church of St. Mary. Then the King, lifting up his hands, said, "I commend myself to Mary, the Holy Mother of God, my heavenly Mistress, that by her blessed intercession I may be reconciled to her well-beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ," and instantly expired.

Although prepared for the event, the suddenness of its occurrence startled and astonished his attendants, who, says the chronicler, "became as men who had lost their wits." Notwithstanding, the wealthier of them had wit enough to mount their horses and depart in haste to secure their property, while the servants, observing that their masters had disappeared, laid hands on the arms, the plate, the robes, the linen, and all the royal furniture, and made off with their plunder, leaving the corpse of the Conqueror almost naked on the floor, "from the hour of primes to that of tierce."

Later in the day the Archbishop of Rouen, attended by the clergy and the monks, went in procession to St. Gervaise, and after the customary prayer for the dead, ordered the body to be conveyed to Caen for sepulture in the Abbey of St. Stephen, which William had founded; but not one of his relations or retinue was present to take charge of the corpse. At length a knight named Herluin, undertook the office for the

love of God and the honour of his country. He caused the body to be embalmed at his own expense, and then carried in a hearse to the port, where it was placed on board a vessel in the Seine, and brought by water and land to Caen. But the misadventures of the remains of the once great and dreaded Conqueror were not to end here. An alarming fire broke out in the city as the funeral procession was on its way to the abbey, and mourners, clergy, and laity rushed to look after the safety of their own houses and assist in extinguishing the flames, leaving only a few monks to accompany the hearse to the gates of St. Stephen's. When the company had reassembled, mass was said, and Gilbert, Bishop of Evreux, ascending the pulpit, pronounced a long panegyric on the deceased sovereign, extolling his valour, justice, and piety, the severity with which he punished robbers and oppressors, and the protection he afforded to the defenceless poor, upon which a man named Ascelin, the son of Arthur, stepped forward and in a loud voice said: "The ground whereon you stand was the courtyard of my father's house, which that man for whom you are bidden to pray, when he was yet but Duke of Normandy, took forcible possession of, and in defiance of all justice by an exercise of tyrannical power he founded this abbey. I therefore lay claim to this land and demand its restitution, and in God's

name forbid the body of the spoiler being covered with earth which is my property and buried in my inheritance."

This awkward commentary on the character of the rigid administrator of justice, the chastiser of robbers, and the protector of the defenceless poor, caused considerable confusion and consternation in the assembly, more particularly when the testimony of the neighbours of Ascelin proved in support of his claim.

He was conferred with in private. Sixty shillings were paid to him on the spot, and a proportionable price agreed upon for the purchase of the rest of the property. William of Malmesbury says that Prince Henry was present, and paid "the brawler" a hundred pounds of silver to quiet his audacious demands.

Yet another mishap!—on lowering the corpse into the stone coffin which had already been placed in the grave, they were obliged to use some force, as the masons had made it too short. The consequence was, that the king being very corpulent, the bowels burst, and an intolerable stench, which the clouds of incense failed to subdue, caused a precipitate retreat of the mourners, and brought the funeral ceremonies to an abrupt conclusion. How this could occur with a body which had been embalmed I do not understand. The

process must have been very hastily and unskilfully performed, or, what is more likely, omitted altogether.

This miserable close of the history of a mighty monarch has been moralized upon sufficiently. Never more efficiently than by his contemporary Orderic Vital. I leave the Conqueror in his grave, undazzled by his brilliant achievements in the field—admitting the astuteness of his policy, and regretting that in the whole of his life I have been unable to discover the least trait of magnanimity, the least indication of one truly humane or generous feeling. That he was not cruel for cruelty's sake is about the praise which may be accorded to the burglar who would find no particular pleasure in picking a lock if he could get nothing by it, but would not hesitate to commit murder if it were necessary for the security of his booty. Can an instance be cited of his having considered the interest of any one but himself, or refraining from any gratification that would entail loss or injury to others? "He loved the tall deer as though he were their father," and for the paternal pleasure of hunting and slaying them, he ruthlessly laid waste the lands and utterly ruined thousands upon thousands of the hapless people to whom he should have been a father, putting out the eyes of those who killed hart or hind within his forests! Courteous and debonnair to those who

implicitly obeyed his behests or were instrumental to his far-sighted policy, he was "stark" to all who opposed him. Like Sheridan's Sir Anthony, he was compliance itself when he was not thwarted. No one more easily led—when he had his own way.

The favours conferred by him on his own family failed in nearly every instance to secure their affection or fidelity, and such remarkable ingratitude can only be accounted for by the distrust the recipients of his bounty entertained of the motives of their benefactor. To the same cause may fairly be attributed the otherwise inexplicable tergiversations of his feudal lord, Henry, King of France, one day his generous protector, and the next his bitter enemy.

His liberalities to his followers were cheaply bestowed at the expense of others, and not only unavoidable rewards for important services rendered, but excellent securities for their future good behaviour, as he could seize at his pleasure the broad lands they held of him, every acre of which he caused to be measured and valued, the number and condition of every human being, and the live stock upon their lands ascertained and recorded, so that not a rood of land nor a living soul, nor a pig, could escape his clutches, if, upon any pretence whatever, he thought fit to take possession of them. To this masterpiece of policy we

are indebted for the great survey of England, known as Domesday Book, the worth of which to the student of English history is not lessened by the cause of its compilation.

His rigid administration of justice appears like a grim satire on the supreme contempt of it he exhibited in his own conduct. Indignation at the slightest infringement of the monopoly of murder, robbery, and wrong doing vested in his own person. Even the reputation for conjugal fidelity so eagerly claimed for him by his apologists, rests upon a very fragile foundation, and as we learn from William of Malmesbury, was circumstantially denied in his time. The same writer, while he considers it folly—good, easy man,—to believe such stories about "so great a king," unwittingly deprives the boasted continence of the Conqueror of any claim to rank amongst "his other virtues," whatever they may have been, by informing us that even in his youth he was so insensible to the allurements of beauty, that the gossip of the day attributed his indifference to a defect of Nature, and not to a sense of morality. "Love! his affections did not that way tend." Notwithstanding all the sentimental descriptions of his conjugal affection, I question whether he ever loved any one in the world but himself. With a will of iron he possessed a

heart of stone, and the damning proof that he had not been able to secure the attachment of a single fellow-creature of any class is patent by the fact of his body being ignominiously stripped and utterly deserted the moment he was no longer to be feared.

But is there any real foundation for the stereotyped assertion of that connubial fidelity and felicity which has been so greatly vaunted by modern writers; that uxorious devotion which is claimed for him as the "One virtue," which must be allowed to him "linked with a thousand crimes," of which it is admitted he was guilty?

The wife, whose loss he is said to have deplored so deeply, though crowned in England, was immediately sent back to Normandy, and from that day to the hour of her death was never again allowed to set foot in her doating husband's kingdom. With the exception of his hasty and brief visits to Normandy, rendered imperative by political events, the affectionate and faithful husband saw nothing of the beloved partner of his bosom for sixteen years! The Queen of England was compelled to be merely the vice-regent of the Duchy of Normandy. The latter portion of their married life was notoriously one constant scene of altercation, occasioned by Matilda's surreptitious support of her favourite son, Robert Court-heuse,

against the father, who disliked and despised him, and the presence of William at her death-bed was purely accidental, as he happened to be at that moment in Normandy. The hypocrite, who had shed crocodile tears over the head of the conveniently murdered Edwin, has forfeited all claim to be considered a sincere mourner under any circumstances, unless they unfavourably affected his individual interests, and therefore the recorded long lamentation for the loss of his wife, if unfeigned, must be estimated according to the political importance he attached to her existence at that period.

Where is the slightest evidence of his affection? And now as regards his fidelity. There is certainly no conclusive evidence that William Peverel was the natural son of William of Normandy by the daughter of Ingleric, as stated in the reign of Elizabeth, not only by Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, but "the learned Camden," who was a conscientious historian as well as a herald.

I perfectly agree with Mr. Freeman that "the uncorroborated assertions of a herald are not materials for history." I will go further, and contend that the uncorroborated assertions of any writer are not to be implicitly relied on, and though Mr. Freeman is not bound to believe the herald, his uncorroborated asser-

tion to the contrary is of no greater value,—much less, indeed, when the characters of Glover and Camden are taken into consideration, who were the last men in the world to invent such a story, and had beyond doubt what they considered sufficient authority for their statements. That they did not cite it, is to be deplored; but such omissions were too common in those days; and the absence of any possible motive for their fabricating such a story must relieve them at least of the responsibility.

That scandals were in general circulation respecting the Conqueror as early as the thirteenth century is acknowledged by William of Malmesbury; and if we are to discredit the statement of Glover and Camden as regards Peverel, and the report of Matilda's jealousy of the daughter of another priest recorded by Malmesbury, what answer is to be made to Père Anselm and other writers who set down a natural daughter of King William as the wife of Hugh du Château-sur-Loir? Who was really the father of Thomas Archbishop of York, who, in 1081, *in presence of King William*, of Matilda his Queen, and their sons Robert and William, Archbishop Lanfranc, and other important personages, signed himself "*Regis filius*"? (Olivarius Vredius, Gen. Com. Fland. Prob. Tab. 3.) He and his brother Sampson, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, were two

young clerks sent by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, to Liége, for their education. Thomas, a simple canon of Bayeux at the time of the Conquest, was, on the first opportunity, placed on the archiepiscopal throne of York! Brompton vaguely calls him the son of a priest; and we learn from an obituary appended to the "Liber Vitæ Dunelmensis," in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Durham, a MS. of uncertain date, that the names of his parents were Osbert and Muriel;* but the Archbishop calls himself "son of the King" to the King's face? Has Vredius or his printer made a blunder? Did Thomas actually declare himself "Regis filius?"

A marvellous example of the successfulness of success, the long series of victories and advantages obtained by him threw a glory round his name as a king, in the blaze of which his crimes as a man were altogether overlooked, or but dimly discernible, by later historians; while his bounties to the Church, which he eagerly enumerated on his miserable death-bed, his enrichment and foundation of abbeys and convents, and the distribution of the enormous wealth he had wrung from his English subjects amongst the churches throughout his dominions, secured for him the few

* "Liber Vitæ Dunelm.," ed. Surtees Soc., pp. 139-40. *Vide* also the notice of William Peverel, vol. ii., in which I have more fully discussed the subject.

words of praise with which the old clerical chroniclers qualify their honest condemnation of his general conduct. In the present age we can only look upon them as the bribes which the superstition of those days, assiduously fostered by the priesthood, who reaped the benefit of them, induced the most atrocious criminals to believe would avert the anger of Heaven.

I must again observe, this is a personal and not a political history. I have dealt with the man, and not with the monarch, and if my estimate of his character be considered unfair, I can only appeal to the facts on which it is founded, his own confessions as reported by Orderic, and the testimony of chroniclers of his own age, who wrote while his sons Rufus and Henry were still on the throne, and who, much as they are to be commended for their frankness, could scarcely fail being influenced by considerations of the existing circumstances and the possible danger of stronger denunciation.

In future chapters further proof will be given incidentally of the cruelty, treachery, and rapacity of "this grasping and suspicious tyrant, hated alike by both nations, and harassed by enemies from his hearth to his utmost frontier," * who, while justifying, by permission of an inscrutable Providence, the epithet of

* Cobbe: History of the Norman Kings of England.

Conqueror, in its familiar acceptation, singularly throughout his career, from the moment he clutched the rushes in his infant grasp to the day he seized the crown of England, proved still more clearly his claim to the title "Conquæstor" in its stricter sense of "Acquirer." *

* *Vide* Ducange in voce. The word was so understood in Normandy. Certain parishes on the left bank of the Ept, annexed by Hugh de Gournay to his domains, in the 12th century, were distinguished as "*Les Conquets Hue de Gournay.*"—De la Mairie. Recherches Hist.

CHAPTER II.

THE FAMILY OF THE CONQUEROR.

I INTRODUCE here the few observations I have to make on the uncertain and disputed points in the history of William the Conqueror, his queen and family, to which I alluded at the commencement of the former chapter, in lieu of placing them as an appendix at the end of the volume, as they principally turn on questions of date, and those who care to discuss them would naturally desire to do so before passing to other subjects. The less curious reader can "skip and go on."

The first and most important date open to controversy is that of the birth of William—most important because it affects all the rest.

The latest investigators place it in 1027 or 1028, and one (Mons. Deville) endeavours to fix it exactly to the month of June or of July in the former year.

Were it a question of only a few weeks or a few months I should not have thought it necessary to

moot it here; but it is one of years, and of much more consequence than it appears at first sight.

The calculations of the upholders of the dates 1027-28 are founded on:—

1. The contract of marriage of Duke Richard II. and Judith, the parents of Robert, said to be dated in 1008. According to this date, Robert being their second son, would hardly have been born before 1010, and could be only seventeen or eighteen at the birth of William, and consequently his passion for Herleve was that of a boy of sixteen or seventeen at the utmost.

2. A charter granted by Robert previous to his departure on pilgrimage to Jerusalem dated in the ides of January, 1035, and as it is agreed on all hands that William was between seven and eight years old when his father left Normandy, that would place his birth in 1027-28.

3. The cartulary recently discovered at Falaise recording William's birth and baptism there in 1027.

4. The statement of Guillaume de Jumiéges that William was not quite sixty at his death in 1087.

A sort of collateral substantiation of the date of the pilgrimage I find also in the story told by the author of the "Gesta Consulum Andegavensium," of the meeting of Duke Robert with Fulk Nera, Count

of Anjou, at Constantinople in 1035, and their travelling thence to the Holy Land together, escorted by some merchants of Antioch, who had offered to be their guides. Robert becoming fatigued was carried in a litter by four Moors. A Norman pilgrim returning from Jerusalem, meeting his sovereign with this equipage, asked if he had any message to send to his friends. "Tell them," said the Duke, "that thou sawest me borne to Paradise by four devils." But it is to be observed that Fulk was also a pilgrim to the Holy Land in 1028, and that the compiler of "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates" remarks that the work I have quoted "ne mérite pas beaucoup de créance."

On the other hand we have also to consider the statement of William himself, who, according to Orderic, declared on his death-bed that he was sixty-*four*, which would make him born in 1023; that he was eight years old when his father went into what he calls voluntary exile, and that he had ruled the duchy fifty-six years, thus placing the death of Robert in 1031. That date is supported by the perfectly independent testimony of the Saxon Chronicle, which becomes more trustworthy in the eleventh century, wherein we read, "A° 1031. . . . and Robert, Earl of Normandy, went to Jerusalem and there died, and William, *who was afterwards king in England*, suc-

ceeded to Normandy, though he was but a child." The words I have printed in italics, however, detract from the value of the evidence, as they must have been written at least thirty-five years after the event, and perhaps much later.

The Peterborough and Canterbury chronicles follow the Saxon, and Roger of Wendover and Matthew of Westminster are merely copyists of the earlier writers.

I have seen too many errors in the dates of charters and other MSS., arising from clerical or typographical carelessness, to pin my faith upon any copy, printed or other, even when the original document is undoubtedly genuine, and therefore hesitate to accept the date accorded to the contract of marriage of Richard and Judith, particularly as there are several obvious inaccuracies in the copy printed in Martene (*Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum*, vol. i.).

Judith was the only child of Conan le Tort, Count of Rennes, by his second wife Ermengarde, daughter of Geoffrey Grisegonelle, married according to the "Chroniques de Mont St. Michel" in 970. Conan was slain at the battle of Conquereux in 992. Now, if these dates can be at all relied on, what age was Judith likely to be in 1008, if not married till then? At what period of the two-and-twenty years of her parents' married life was she born? If in the ordinary

course of nature, she must have been five- or six-and-thirty in 1008!

Judith died in 1017, the mother of five children: Richard, Robert, Guillaume, Alix (also called Judith), and Eleanore; and if only married in 1008 her eldest son Richard could scarcely have been born before 1009, and Robert, as already remarked, 1010. Whether Guillaume or Alix was their third child is uncertain, but before 1025 Alix was the wife of Renaud, son of Otto-Guillaume, Count of Burgundy, who, having fallen into the power of Hugues, Bishop of Auxerre and Count of Châlons, was strictly confined in prison by that prelate. Richard II., Duke of Normandy, thereupon sent his sons, Richard and Robert, with an army to relieve their brother-in-law, and Count Hugues was compelled to present himself with a saddle on his back (the usual custom at that period) and crave mercy at the hands of the sons of the Duke of Normandy.

Now, doubting that young warriors were mere boys of fifteen and sixteen years of age in 1025 (Richard, the eldest, dying in 1027, and leaving a natural son named Nicholas, who was Abbot of St. Ouen in 1042), I cannot bring myself to believe in the "*extreme youth*" of Robert, as pointed out by Mons. Deville, and without presuming to fix an exact date, believe that both Richard and Robert were nearly of full age

at the death of their father, whether that event occurred in 1026 or 1027.

Leaving, therefore, the precise period of the birth of William the Conqueror still undecided, the weight of evidence inclining rather to 1027, let us hasten to the consideration of the equally vexed question concerning the number and ages of his family, consisting undoubtedly of four sons, and presumably of five or six daughters.*

Notwithstanding the various and conflicting dates suggested for the marriage of William and Matilda, ranging from 1047 to 1053, I think we may consider it sufficiently proved that it was solemnized at the close of 1053 or beginning of 1054, and that Robert, their first child, was born in the course of the latter year.

Their second child I take to have been Adeliza, eldest daughter, born apparently in 1055, being seven years old in 1062, when betrothed to Harold, and dead before 1066, as her decease was the undeniable answer of the Saxon king to one of William's charges of broken faith.

Cecilia must have been the third child, as she was clearly born in 1056, dedicated to the service of God by her father and mother at the consecration of the

* Freeman: Nor. Con., vol. v. p. 468, note 4.

Church of the Holy Trinity, Caen, 18th June, 1066, was elected abbess on the death of Matilda, the first abbess, in 1112, and died on the 30th of July, 1125, in the seventieth year of her age.

The fourth child appears to have been Richard, born 1057–58, who, with his younger brother, William (fifth child), born 1060, witnessed the consecration of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Caen in 1066.

Richard was killed in the New Forest by accident during the reign of his father in England; and his brother William, surnamed Rufus, who succeeded the Conqueror as King of England, met his death, as is well known, A. D. 1100, in the same forest, doomed apparently to be fatal to the progeny of the heartless despot who had sacrificed to his passion for the chase the homes and hearths of thousands of his unfortunate subjects.

The sixth child I take to be Constance, born in 1061, married to Alain, Duke of Brittany, in 1086, and who died, poisoned by her own servants, according to some writers, on the 13th of August, 1094, at the early age of thirty-three.

Mrs. Green, notwithstanding she places her birth "most likely about 1057," subsequently tells us, upon the authority of no less than four chronicles, that she died in 1094 "when she had scarcely attained her thirty-

third year." If the latter statement is to be depended upon, she must have been born in 1061, and the probabilities are all in favour of that date. Miss Strickland, by a curious inadvertency, makes Constance die some years before her mother, "after seven years' unfruitful marriage." The marriage having taken place three years after her mother's death!

The seventh child I believe to have been Adela, born circa 1062, married, at Chartres in 1080, to Stephen, Count of Blois and Chartres, and deceased in 1137, in the seventy-fourth year of her age.

Agatha, believed by Mrs. Green to be also Matilda, whose name appears in Domesday, the eighth and last child born in Normandy, circa 1064, was promised to Edwin, the Saxon Earl of Chester, in 1067, when only three years old, and after his death contracted to Alfonso I., King of Castile and Galicia. She died on her journey to Spain, having, as the story goes, prayed she might not live to be married, and by unceasing genuflections caused a horny substance to form on her knees.

More incredible is the sentimental account of "blighted hopes" and "crushed affections" indulged in by Mrs. Green, as the child was but three years old when she first saw the "fair-haired Saxon," seven when her "lover" was murdered, and scarcely fifteen

when she was contracted to Alfonso; for she must have been dead in 1080, as in that year the Castilian monarch married the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy.

This is of course according to my calculation, which I by no means presume to be irrefutable, and also applies solely to Agatha, leaving it to others to identify her with Matilda "filiæ regis," whose chamberlain (Geoffrey) held lands in Hampshire of the King for service rendered to his said daughter. That there was a Matilda, daughter of King William, is undeniable, not only from the entry in Domesday, but from her being named with her sisters Adelaide and Constance in an encyclical letter to the nuns of the Holy Trinity at Caen in 1112. But as the survey was only begun in 1085, and completed in 1086, it will be difficult, I think, to prove that Agatha, who must have been dead in 1080, was the same daughter as Matilda, supposed to be living five or six years later.

Henry, afterwards King Henry I., the youngest of the whole family, was the only child born in England, and the date of his birth is generally acknowledged to be 1068, his mother having come over from Normandy for her coronation in that year. Now let us see when it would be possible that a tenth child, if not a twin, could have been born to William by his

duchess, and of sufficient age to have a chamberlain appointed to her before 1085.

1. Robert, born 1054.
2. Adeliza, born 1055; dead before 1066.
3. Cecilia, born 1056.
4. Richard, born 1057–58.
5. William, born 1060.
6. Constance, born 1061.
7. Adela, born 1062.
8. Agatha, born 1064; dead before 1080.
9. Henry, born 1068.

The ingenious theory that Matilda was no other than the mysterious Gundrada, the former name being simply a translation of the latter, is negatived by the fact that Gundrada died wife of William de Warren in 1085, while the survey was in the course of compilation. That one daughter should have been named after her mother is most natural. That the King had a daughter so named, and that she was apparently living in 1085, must be conceded; but that she was the same person as Agatha "the inexorable logic of facts" positively contradicts. There is just the possibility of its being Constance, who survived her mother, and was married to Alain, Duke of Brittany, as before stated, in 1086. She is said to have been the favourite daughter and companion of Queen Matilda,

and for nearly six years the only princess at Court. At the period of her mother's death she would have been twenty-three, and previous to her marriage would no doubt have had a chamberlain and other officers appointed for her service. That she was ever called Matilda there is no evidence yet discovered; but there is no daughter of Matilda's more likely to have been so. But then we have to get over the awkward fact of Matilda and Constance being *separately* named in the encyclical letter of 1112.*

Matilda is consequently, as Mr. Freeman truly describes her, "without a history." The vexed question of Gundrada will be discussed in the chapter comprising the biography of her husband, William, Earl of Warren and Surrey, and in connection with it the presumed widowhood of Matilda of Flanders, and her passion for Brihtric Meaw.

I gladly pass to the companions of the Conqueror.

* "Matildem Anglorum reginam, nostri cœnobii fondatricem, Adelidem, *Mathildem* Constantiam, *filias ejus*."

Also in the Rouleau des Morts of the same Abbey we read:—"Orate pro nostris Mathilde Regina et Willielmo ejus filio atque pro *filiabus ejus* Adelide, *Mathilde*, Constancia."—Recherches sur le Domesday, p. 234.

CHAPTER III.

ODO, BISHOP OF BAYEUX AND EARL OF KENT. ROBERT, COMTE DE MORTAIN AND EARL OF CORNWALL.

ODO, BISHOP OF BAYEUX.

First amongst the companions of the Conqueror must be ranked his two brothers of the half blood, the well-known Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent, and the less notorious Robert, Count of Mortain in Normandy, and Earl of Cornwall in England.

Both were some years younger than William, his mother, Herleve, having married Herluin de Conteville, by whom she had, besides the above sons, two daughters, one named Emma, wife of Richard, Viscount of the Avranchin, and mother by him of Hugh, Earl of Chester, and the other named Muñel, who became the wife of Eudo de Capello, or al Chapel. A sister also of Muriel married the Lord of Ferte Macé, whose son William is called in a charter, nephew of Bishop Odo. Who was her mother?

Of Odo's infancy we have no record; but whether the eldest of Herleve's children by her husband Herluin or not, he could scarcely have been of age in

1049, when his predecessor, Bishop Hugh, died while attending the council at Rheims in the October of that year.

Mr. Freeman says, "a son of Herluin and Herleva could not be born before 1036," assuming it to be a proved fact that the marriage of Herleve did not take place until after the death of Duke Robert.

I have ventured, however, to dispute that assertion (*vide* p. 15, *ante*), and given my reasons for agreeing with William of Malmesbury, and consequently place the birth of Odo some six years earlier, which would make him nineteen at his consecration in 1049, young enough, in all conscience, for a bishop, and in sufficient accordance with the statement of Orderic Vital, who tells us that Odo's relationship to Duke William procured for him the bishopric while he was very young, and that he was actively employed during the fifty (strictly forty-eight) years he held it, which may fairly be reconciled with the date of his death in 1097.*

At the time of the Conquest, therefore, I consider him to have been six-and-thirty, Duke William himself being, according to one calculation, in the fortieth or at the most the forty-third year of his age.

* Orderic says in the month of February, 1096, which would be 1097; the year in the Julian calendar not terminating till the 25th of March.

We have seen Odo called to council by William on the receipt of the news of Harold's assumption of the Crown of England, and we hear of his promise to provide one hundred vessels towards the formation of the fleet,* and subsequently fighting with great bravery at Hastings.

Mounted on a white horse, and wearing over a white albe a coat of mail, "wide in the body, but with tight sleeves," he rode wherever the battle raged most fiercely, and, wielding a baston, charged with his knights wherever aid was needed, and did signal service that day. (*Roman de Roú.*)

In the Bayeux Tapestry he is depicted in accordance with the above description. Both he and the Duke are armed with "bastons," which are nothing less than formidable rugged clubs, and over the head of the bishop are the words, "Hic Odo Eps baculum tenens confortat pueros," illustrating a critical period of the battle when the varlets who had the care of the harness took fright and began to abandon it. Odo,

* "Ab Odone, episcopo de Baios, C. naves."—Taylor's List. Wace says only forty:

"De son frere l'Evesque Odun
Reçut quarante nés par dun."

He admits, however, he is not certain how many ships each baron gave. The MS. from which Taylor printed his List is presumed to have been written temp. Henry I., and therefore earlier in point of date than the Roman de Rou, which was commenced in the following reign, and completed in 1160.

"the good priest," as Wace calls him, observed the disorder, and galloping up, exclaimed, "Stand fast! stand fast! move not a foot! Fear nothing, for please God we shall conquer yet!" very probably enforcing his exhortation with the "argumentum baculinum," of which he was so powerful a master.

As far as the bishop is concerned we may believe that his fighting with a bludgeon in lieu of a sword or a lance was in evasion of the edict of the council of Rheims, A.D. 1049, prohibiting the bearing of arms by the clergy; but the war-club was a not unusual weapon at that period, and seems to have been the precursor of the iron mace of the Middle Ages.

Odo was one of the first, if not the first, of William's companions who received the reward of his services in the gift of broad lands, high honours, and official power. Dugdale thus sums up his possessions in England:—"In Kent he had no less than an hundred and eighty-four lordships, or the greater part of them; in Essex thirty-nine, in Oxfordshire thirty-two, in Herefordshire twenty-three, in Buckinghamshire thirty, in Worcestershire two, in Bedfordshire eight, in Northamptonshire twelve, in Nottinghamshire five, in Norfolk twenty-two, in Warwickshire six, and in Lincolnshire seventy-six." In all four hundred and thirty-nine.

He had also the custody of the castle of Dover, "the lock and key of the kingdom of England," as it is called by Matthew Paris; and the whole county of Kent, of which he was created earl, was committed to his charge. As a Count Palatine he possessed power over all other earls and magnates in the land. As Justice of England he was the principal person under the King for the administration of the laws throughout the nation, and in conjunction with William Fitz Osbern exercised chief superintendency of all the military forces of the kingdom as well in the field as in garrison. On the King's visit to Normandy after his coronation, the custody of the realm was intrusted to Odo in conjunction with the said William Fitz Osbern, with authority to erect castles at their discretion in all parts of the kingdom.

This sudden accession of extraordinary power and immense wealth had an evil influence over an ambitious and rapacious nature. Believing no man durst oppose him, he took forcible possession of several lordships belonging to the archbishopric of Canterbury, upon which Lanfranc, who had been advanced to that See by King William in the fifth year of his reign, to the great mortification of Odo, who had coveted the primacy, complained to his sovereign, by whose command a council was summoned at Pinenden in Kent,

composed of all persons in the county most conversant with the ancient customs and usages therein, and Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, was appointed judge in the place of the King. After much dispute, the decision was given in favour of the Archbishop, and sentence pronounced that he should enjoy the lands belonging to his church as freely as the King himself enjoyed his own demesne lands.

This first and humiliating check to the power and arrogance of the great Earl-bishop appears to have rankled in his bosom, and gradually loosened the ties of consanguinity, personal regard, and feudal obligation by which he is reported to have been attached to his sovereign to such a degree that "he could not be severed from him, not even in the camp, being constant and faithful always to him."* No outbreak, however, immediately occurred between the kinsmen. Odo knew William too well openly to dispute his will, independently of the fact that in this case it was in accordance with the solemn and impartial voice of justice.

He continued, therefore, in power and favour for some years; marching with his late judge and brother prelate, Geoffrey of Coutances, against the rebellious Earls of Hereford and Norfolk in 1074, and four years

* Gesta Will. Ducis Norm. p. 209, etc.

afterwards leading an army into Northumberland to suppress an insurrection there, and avenge the murder of Walcher, Bishop of Durham, at Gateshead, near Newcastle-on-Tyne. In this expedition he is accused of much cruelty, and of having sacrilegiously despoiled the Cathedral of Durham of many valuables, amongst which is specified a rare crosier of sapphire.

In the mean while he was contemplating a great and audacious act, encouraged by the predictions of some pretended soothsayers at Rome, who professed to have discovered that after the death of Gregory VII. an Odo would succeed to the Tiara. Inflated by this prophecy, which he interpreted as alluding to him, he purchased a palace in Rome, and furnished it sumptuously, at the same time propitiating the senators by lavish gifts, and tempting by promises of ample reward many choice soldiers to accompany him to Italy; amongst them no less a personage than Hugh, Earl of Chester, one of the most important and powerful of the Anglo-Norman nobility.

King William, who was at that time in Normandy, receiving intimation of these proceedings, and foreseeing the serious consequences to himself should his ambitious half-brother succeed in occupying the Chair of St. Peter, returned with all speed to England, and

confronted Odo in the Isle of Wight at the very moment he was setting forth on his journey, attended by a magnificent retinue.

Addressing the nobles in his own suite, he represented to them how, in consequence of the disturbed state of Normandy, he intrusted the government of England to this Odo during his absence, and that while occupied in suppressing the insurrections in the duchy, his brother had grievously oppressed his people in England, robbed the churches of their land, revenues, and ornaments, and seduced those soldiers who should have been employed to defend the kingdom from the Danes and the Irish to enter his service and cross the Alps in his company. At the conclusion of his accusation he commanded the men-at-arms to arrest the traitor; but no one daring to lay hands on a bishop, William himself seized him, and to Odo's remonstrance that he was a clerk and a minister of God, and was not amenable for his acts to any one but the Pope, replied with his usual readiness, "I do not condemn a clerk or bishop, but I arrest an earl I have myself created, and to whom, as my Vicegerent, I intrusted the government of my realm, it being my will that he should render an account of the stewardship I committed to him." *

* Ordericus Vitalis, lib. vii. cap. viii.

Other writers * give Lanfranc the credit of suggesting to William this ingenious distinction. Be it as it may, the ambitious prelate was arrested and conveyed to Rouen, where he was imprisoned during the remainder of William's life, who only on his death-bed reluctantly consented to his release, predicting the evil consequences of his restoration to liberty.

Odo is said to have been present at the funeral of the Conqueror, but I think it scarcely probable. He was, however, shortly afterwards restored to his earldom by his nephew, William Rufus, and speedily justified the opinion his dying brother had entertained of him. Irritated at finding himself shorn of some of the vast power he had formerly possessed, William de St. Carilief, Bishop of Durham, being made Chief Justiciary, and all the affairs of the kingdom no longer conducted according to his will, he commenced conspiring against Rufus in favour of Robert, whom he had confirmed in the government of Normandy, and asserted that the kingdom of England would be much better ruled by the latter, who would now atone for the follies of his youth by diligence and activity; that William Rufus was effeminately brought up, cruel in disposition, and a coward at heart, regardless of all vows, divine or human, and that the honours which his

* Matthew Paris: Roger of Wendover.

countrymen had acquired by many toils were now in danger of being lost. By these and similar representations he contrived to gain over to his views Roger de Montgomeri, Earl of Shrewsbury, Robert de Mowbray, and other powerful persons, including the Bishop of Coutances and, strange to say, the new justiciary himself.

Odo now broke out into open rebellion, and ravaged the royal possessions in Kent and the lands of Archbishop Lanfranc, whom he specially hated, and accused of having instigated his arrest and imprisonment by King William the elder. Collecting great booty, he stored it in his castle at Rochester, while his adherents plundered Bath and Berkeley, and laid waste the county of Worcester. From Rochester he marched to Pevensey, then held by his brother, Count of Mortain,* whither he was followed by the King, who had hastily raised considerable forces, principally of the native English, to whom he had promised remission of taxes and freedom of the chase in return for their assistance, and having taken Tunbridge Castle from Gilbert Fitz Richard, who had joined the rebels, now laid strict siege to Pevensey. At the end of six weeks Odo's

* Orderic says that Odo's brother, Robert Earl of Mortain, held Pevensey against the King, lib. x. cap. iv. Florence of Worcester speaks of it as Robert's own castle, sub anno 1088.

provisions began to fail, and foreseeing the certainty of surrender, he offered the King to give up not only Pevensey, but also Rochester Castle, and to quit the realm, with a promise upon oath never to return to it without William's permission. The King accepted these terms, and sent Odo under strong guard, with a body of troops, to Rochester, to take possession of the castle, which he was to render to them. Upon their arrival and demanding entrance in the name of the King, with consent of the Bishop, who had resigned it to him, the garrison, judging from the appearance of Odo, whom they could see from the walls, that he was acting under restraint, opened the gates suddenly, and instead of admitting the royal troops, sallied out upon them, made them all prisoners, and brought them, together with the Bishop, into the castle.

Rufus, enraged at this intelligence, marched with all the forces he could muster upon Rochester, which, not being in a condition to endure a long siege, was speedily surrendered, and Odo found himself again a prisoner. Deprived of his earldom and stripped of all his ill-got treasure, he left England, according to his oath at Pevensey, and repaired to Normandy, where he was well received by Duke Robert, whose cause he had so strenuously supported, and who now intrusted him with the sole government of the province, which,

through the Duke's slothful ease, was in a state of dissolution. Crimes of the most horrible and detestable description were committed with perfect impunity. Fire, robbery, and homicide were matters of daily occurrence. "The depopulated country and crowds of widows and infirm persons lamenting the calamities brought upon them, are witnesses to this day," says Orderic, "of the truth of my statements." "The good priest," as Wace amusingly calls him, though he assumed all the power of the Duke, does not appear to have exercised it in the repression of these abominable disorders and the punishment of the greatest criminals, in the list of whom it is painful to record such names as William Comte d'Evreux, Richard de Courci, Robert de Mowbray, and even Prince Henry himself, who had been invested by the Duke, his brother, with the Comté of the Cotentin, and who as soon as certain intelligence reached him of the surrender of Rochester, crossed the sea to England, and demanded of King William the investiture of his mother's domains. Having obtained his request, he returned in the autumn of the same year to Normandy, accompanied by Robert de Belesme, son of Roger de Montgomeri, who had been pardoned by the King for his complicity in the rebellion of Odo. The Duke, in the mean while, had heard a report

that his brother Henry and Robert de Belesme had not only made their peace with Rufus, but had also bound themselves by oaths to the Duke's disadvantage. Taking counsel, therefore, with Odo, whose advice we are told "he followed in some things, making light of it in others," he issued orders for their arrest, and at the moment of their landing, unsuspicious of any danger, they were seized and fettered and committed to the custody of Odo, who imprisoned Henry at Bayeux and Robert de Belesme at Neuilly.

The Earl of Shrewsbury, hearing of his son's captivity, hastened over to Normandy, having obtained the King's licence, and put all his castles in a state of defence against the Duke.

Odo, still full of wrath at the defeat and humiliation he had suffered in England, "like a dragon struck to earth and vomiting flames," in lieu of endeavouring to appease dissensions, exerted himself in fomenting any commotions in the duchy which might by some means or other cause trouble and vexation to the King, who had impoverished and expelled him. Hastening to the Duke at Rouen, he exhorted him to take up arms and march against certain malcontents who had set his authority at naught; and especially the Earl of Shrewsbury, the head of that family of Talvas, the

extirpation of the whole of which he urged could alone ensure peace to the nation.

I will spare the reader the infliction of the long speech Orderic puts in the mouth of "the Turbulent Bishop," and which, if it have any foundation in truth, is only remarkable for the impudence with which this graceless, treacherous, and unscrupulous prelate could descant on the vices of others, and preach justice, gentleness, magnanimity, consideration of the poor and defenceless, observation of the laws of God, and reliance on the protection of the Almighty.

His address was however received, we are assured, with cordial approbation by all who heard it. The Duke assembled his forces and marched to Nantes, where he was joined by Geoffrey de Mayenne, Robert de Nevers, surnamed the Burgundian, Elias de Beaugencie, and many others, with their contingents.

The Norman troops were commanded by Bishop Odo, once more bestriding a war-horse, and wielding, no doubt, the iron-shod club as formerly at Senlac, and with him were William Comte d'Evreux, one of the principal despoilers of the duchy, Ralph de Conches, and his nephew William de Breteuil.

The Castle of Ballon, held by one Pagan de Montdoubleau, was the first point of attack, and offered considerable resistance; but, after many losses on

both sides, the garrison came to terms with the Duke, and the united forces of Normandy and Maine laid siege to the Castle of St. Ceneri, in which the family of the captive Robert de Belesme had taken refuge.

The Earl of Shrewsbury had intrusted this rock-throned fastness, washed on three sides by the windings of the Sarthe, to the keeping of a gallant knight named Robert Quarrel, and manfully he discharged his trust; but provisions failing, famine achieved what the force of arms had vainly attempted. The garrison surrendered at discretion; and, exasperated by the determined resistance he had met with, the Duke cruelly deprived the valiant Quarrel of sight, and caused many of the defenders to be barbarously mutilated.

Terrified at the fate of Robert Quarrel and his comrades, the governors of Alençon, Belesme, and other fortresses belonging to Earl Roger consulted together on the propriety of surrendering immediately upon the Duke's approach, when suddenly, to the surprise of all, the weak and fickle Prince terminated the campaign, disbanded his army, and, accepting an offer of peace made to him by the Earl, restored Robert de Belesme to liberty.

That Odo was no party to this unexpected pacification may fairly be concluded, and from the absence of any mention of him in the many turmoils and conflicts

which the unhappy Duchy of Normandy was subjected to during the following six or seven years, it would appear as if he had retired disgusted to his bishopric of Bayeux, and renounced interfering in the government of the country.

The temporary reconciliation of the brothers William and Robert, in 1091, must have been gall and wormwood to him.

In 1093 he is said by Orderic to have celebrated the "execrable marriage" of Philip I. King of France with Bertrade Countess of Anjou, which no French bishop would consent to do, and for which service he was rewarded by the adulterous King with the gift of all the churches in the city of Mantes; and in November 1095 we hear of his being present at the Council of Clermont with Gilbert of Evreux and Serlo of Sécz, and also at the Synod assembled at Rouen by Archbishop William Bonne-âme the following February.

In the month of September, 1096, Robert Courtheuse having mortgaged his Duchy of Normandy to his brother William Rufus for ten thousand silver marks (estimated by M. le Prévost at six thousand six hundred and sixty-six *livres d'argent*), set forth and joined the great body of Crusaders, moved by the eloquence of Pope Urban, and still more by that of the cele-

brated Pierre d'Acheri or l'Ermite (son of Reginald l'Ermite, a family name which was the origin of a mistaken notion that Peter *the Hermit* was a monk and an anchorite), was pouring from all parts of Christendom towards the Holy Land, bent upon wresting Jerusalem and the Sepulchre of our Lord from the power of the Infidels.

Odo accompanied his nephew to Rome, whence he appears to have passed into Sicily, and there at Palermo, in the month of February, 1097, according to our present calculation, he was for the last time arrested by a mightier conqueror than William, that "fell sergeant Death," and was buried by Gilbert Bishop of Evreux, far from his own Cathedral of Bayeux, in the Church of Santa Maria in that city, being some sixty-seven years old; according to which calculation he must have been born in 1029 or 1030, as I have previously stated.

Roger Count of Sicily caused a splendid tomb to be built over him, and Orderic, who gives us this information, sums up his character with the usual allowance made by our reverend chroniclers for the greatest criminals, who considered immunity could be purchased both here and hereafter by gifts to the clergy. "He added to the honours and ornaments of his cathedral, respected the clergy, and, depriving num-

bers of their property, was liberal of what he took from others;" "what he iniquitously amassed was freely bestowed on churches and the poor." The worthy monk of St. Evroult forgot that he had told us earlier in his history "that the monasteries of the saints made great complaints of the injuries they received at the hands of Odo, who with violence and injustice robbed them of the funds with which the English had piously endowed them in ancient times." Equally oblivious was he of the sacrilegious spoliation of the Cathedral of Durham, and the abstraction of the rare crosier of sapphire.

Ambitious, arrogant, rapacious, turbulent, tyrannical, ungrateful and licentious, this bold bad man appears to have been destitute of every virtue. Modern writers have compared him to Wolsey, whom he resembled only in his ostentation and passion for splendour, and that pride of patronage which led him to send young scholars to Liége and other cities to study philosophy; for there is nothing to show that he had any love or reverence for learning or learned men. Wolsey, with all his faults, was a man of much greater intellect and infinitely higher character. He never disgraced his order by such shameless immorality as Odo was accused of by his brother, King William, and of which one proof at least

existed in the person of an illegitimate son, named John, who was living in the reign of Henry I., and was himself much esteemed in the court of that monarch for his eloquence and ingenuity. And this profligate prelate was actually one of the subscribers to the decree of the Synod of Rouen in 1072, confirming those of a former one at Lisieux, A.D. 1055, whereby incontinence in the clergy was solemnly condemned, and rendered punishable by deprivation and loss of revenue.

If posterity is indebted to Odo for anything, it is probably for the origin of that curious and valuable record of the Norman invasion, in which he played so prominent a part, known as the Bayeux Tapestry, and popularly believed to have been the work of Queen Matilda and her handmaidens. This is not the place for me to enter into the controversy which has for many years caused a vast amount of ink-shed and a useless display of utterly irrelevant learning. At the Congress of the British Archæological Association at Hastings, in 1866, I read a paper in which I summed up the various opinions, arguments, and speculations which had been published on the subject during the last hundred years, and expressed my gratitude to Monsieur F. Pluquet for wading through that mass of misapplied erudition and illogical deduc-

tion, and so quietly and concisely disposing of it.* I share his confidence in the antiquity of the tapestry, which has every internal evidence of being contemporaneous with the principal persons represented in it; though neither the work of the first nor the second Matilda, but executed by order of Odo himself, who, as Bishop of Bayeux, alone had the power to deposit and display the representation of a subject from profane history in a sacred edifice.

Thanks to photography we have been enabled to inspect at the Albert Hall a facsimile of this interesting relic of the eleventh century, and contemplate the rude but authentic representations of the Conqueror and some of his companions. In addition to those of Odo which it contains, impressions of his seal are in existence, exhibiting him on one side in his episcopal character, and on the reverse as Earl of Kent, bestriding his destrier, and wielding the sword which he was prohibited from bearing as a Churchman.

I now pass to his brother,

ROBERT, COMTE DE MORTAIN AND EARL OF CORNWALL,

the exact date of whose birth is as much a question

* Mr. Freeman, who has done me the honour to quote my paper, has laid to my charge an oversight of M. Pluquet, respecting Freculf Bishop of Lisieux, which I certainly ought to have corrected, but am otherwise not responsible for.

as that of Odo, who, if his age at the time of his death be correctly stated, must have been the elder of the two; but, whether or not, there was probably not more than a year or so's difference between them. Our first knowledge of him is obained from the fact of his being made Comte de Mortain in the Cotentin (not to be confounded with Mortagne in La Manche), by his uterine brother, Duke William, on the banishment of William the Warling, son of Malger, and grandson of Duke Richard the First, on suspicion of treason—for it really amounted to nothing more—the wily tyrant availing himself of an opportunity to advance, under a pretence of justice, another of his mother's family. This was just previous to Duke William's visit to England in 1051, and Robert, I conclude, might at that period have been nearly of full age, being born, as I take it, *circa* 1031.

In 1054, on the invasion of Normandy by Henry, King of France, we find him joining the army of William, with his knights and retainers; but he was not in the battle of Mortemer, being in the Duke's division, and consequently had no opportunity of distinguishing himself.

We next hear of him at the council called by William on receiving the tidings of Harold's assumption of the crown of England, and subsequently at the

great meeting at Lillebonne, when he promised to contribute to the invading fleet no less than one hundred and twenty vessels, according to the curious Latin record published by Taylor;* an enormous number, but the size has to be taken into consideration, and the list may be held to include boats of every description.

In the great battle of Senlac, Wace tells us he never went far from the Duke, and commanded the chivalry of the Cotentin, but he is not conspicuously delineated in that portion of the Bayeux Tapestry. His share of the spoil is said to have been the greatest. He was created Earl of Cornwall, in which county alone he possessed two hundred and forty-eight manors at the time of the compilation of Domesday; fifty-four in Sussex, besides the borough of Pevensey; seventy-five in Devonshire, forty-nine in Dorsetshire, twenty-nine in Buckinghamshire, thirteen in Hertfordshire, ten in Suffolk, ninety-nine in Northumberland, one hundred and ninety-six in Yorkshire, and twenty-four in other counties, amounting altogether to seven hundred and ninety-seven, with two castles in his county of Cornwall, one at Dunhever and the other at Tremeton.

In 1069, the Earl of Cornwall and Robert Comte d'Eu were left by King William in Lindsey to watch

* A Roberto de Mortoleio, c. et xx.

the Danes who had landed at the mouth of the Humber and invested York, but alarmed at the approach of the Royal forces retreated to the opposite shore, and took shelter in the fens. Availing themselves of the opportunity afforded them by a festival at which the disaffected inhabitants had invited the invaders to be present, the two Earls fell upon them unexpectedly, and pursued them with great slaughter to their very ships. We hear little of him from that period till we find him beside the death-bed of the elder William, supplicating for the pardon and release of his brother Odo, which the King, with great reluctance, at length conceded to the urgent and incessant entreaties of the Earl and his friends. "My brother Odo," said the dying monarch, "is a man not to be trusted—ambitious, given to fleshly desires, and of enormous cruelty. There is no doubt that if he is released he will disturb the whole country, and be the ruin of thousands." The petitioners pledging themselves for the Bishop's reformation, the King yielded from mere weariness, observing, "It is against my own judgment that I permit my brother to be liberated, for be assured that he will cause the death or the grievous injury of many persons."

He was too true a prophet. His son Rufus had scarcely ascended the throne when the pestilent priest

commenced, as we have seen, to sow dissensions amongst his subjects, and succeeded in involving the generous brother, to whom he was indebted for his freedom, in a conspiracy to depose the nephew who had restored him the possessions he had deservedly forfeited. Imposing on the duller nature, and working on the affection of Robert, he beguiled him into a rash attempt to hold his Castle of Pevensey against the King, which failing might have cost the Earl his life or liberty, and the confiscation of all his estates. The Red King, however, made a judicious distinction between his uncles, banishing for ever the arch-traitor Odo, and accepting the submission of Robert, allowed him to return to his allegiance. This event occurred in 1088, and after that time his name disappears from the pages of our historians.

Brooke, in his Catalogue of Nobility, says, without citing any earlier writers, "This Robert was slain in Northumberland in the year 1087." Vincent, in his "Discoverie," points out the error of the date, but is silent respecting the account of the death, which he certainly would not have been if he could have contradicted it. Dugdale was equally ignorant on the subject. "When he departed this world, I do not find," he tell us; "but if he lived after King William Rufus so fatally lost his life by the glance of an arrow in New

Forest from the bow of Walter Tyrrell, then was it," he continues, "unto him that this strange apparition happened, which I shall here speak of;" and then he relates the story told by Matthew Paris, how that, at the very hour the King was killed, the Earl of Cornwall, being hunting in a wood at some distance, and left alone by his attendants, was met by a huge black goat bearing Rufus all black and naked with a wound in his breast. The Earl adjured the goat by the Holy Trinity to tell him whom it was he carried, and was answered, "I am carrying your King to judgment. Yea, that tyrant William Rufus, for I am an evil spirit, and the revenger of his malice which he bore to the Church of God, and it was I that did cause his slaughter, the proto-martyr of England, St. Alban, commanding me so-to-do, who complained to God of him for his grievous oppressions in this Isle of Britain which he first hallowed—all which the Earl related soon after to his followers." What a pity the goat did not reveal the name of the individual he had caused to do the slaughter!

This absurd story, one of the many circulated at the time of the King's death, and tolerably well proving a guilty foreknowledge, is only quoted here as bearing on the question of the decease of Robert Earl of Cornwall, for the narrator does not distinguish the Earl by

his baptismal name, and therefore leaves it uncertain whether he is alluding to Robert or to his son William, who had undoubtedly succeeded to the earldom of Mortain and Cornwall before 1103, as in that year he had left England for Normandy, and was in open rebellion against Henry I., whom he hated from childhood, and by whom he was consequently deprived of his titles and estates for treason.

In the absence at present of any reliable information I am inclined to believe that Robert's death preceded that of his brother Odo, as the monk of Malmesbury tells us that, "not content with the two earldoms of Mortain in Normandy and Cornwall in England, his son William demanded from King Henry the earldom of Kent which his uncle Odo had held, and petulantly declared that he would not put on his robe or mantle till the inheritance he derived from his uncle should be restored to him," a terrible threat, which must have alarmed the King amazingly.

Without presuming to fix on an exact date, I consider then that Robert Earl of Cornwall died between the years 1089 and 1097; and if there be any foundation whatever for Brooke's statement, that he was slain in Northumberland, it is possible that he was there with his nephew King William on the occasion of Robert de Mowbray's rebellion in 1095. It is not the less

remarkable, however, that the death of so important and wealthy a personage should have occurred without its being recorded by a single historian.

Robert Earl of Cornwall had taken to wife previously to the Conquest, but at what period we are ignorant, Matilda, daughter of Roger de Montgomeri, Earl of Shrewsbury, and by her left one son, William, of whom I have just spoken, and three daughters—Agnes, first offered in marriage to William de Grentmesnil, but afterwards the wife of André de Vitry; Denise, married in 1078 to Guy, 3rd Sire de La Val, of whom more hereafter; and Emma, wife of William Count of Toulouse.

Of the three sons of Herleve, William, Odo, and Robert, the latter alone appears to have possessed some kindly feeling. He is described by William of Malmesbury as a man of a heavy, sluggish disposition, but no foul crimes are laid to his charge. He had evidently the courage of his race, and his conduct as a commander is unassociated with any act of cruelty. Scandal has not been busy with his name as a husband. No discords are known to have disturbed his domestic felicity. With the exception of the one occasion when ensnared by the artful representations of Odo, he had joined in the rebellion against Rufus, no trace is seen of his having been involved in any of the revolts and conspiracies

which were continually convulsing both Normandy and England, and his fidelity to the elder William was never for an instant shaken. We have seen him beside the death-bed of that William, pleading urgently for the pardon of their worthless brother, and pledging himself generously but rashly to his reformation; and the distinction made by the second William between his two uncles upon their surrender at Pevensey, shows that he believed in the contrition of Robert, and thoroughly estimated the amount of dependence he could place upon the word or oath of the faithless, treacherous, turbulent Odo.

He was a great benefactor to the Abbey of Grestain in Normandy, which had been founded by his father, Herluin de Conteville, and his appropriation of the possessions which belonged to the Priory of St. Petroc at Bodmin, in Cornwall, founded by King Ethelstan, appears to be justified by the fact that they had been taken from the Priory, and were illegally enjoyed by canons secular. By a charter to the monks of St. Michael in Peril of the Sea, on the coast of Normandy, giving to them and their successors in pure alms for ever the monastery of St. Michael on the Mount in Cornwall, and which must have been executed before 1083, as the name of Queen Matilda occurs amongst the witnesses, we learn that the standard of that saint

had been carried before him in battle, and may fairly conclude that it was in the decisive one at Senlac. This charter appears to have been subsequently confirmed by him in 1085 at Pevensey.*

Meagre as are the materials which we are enabled at present to scrape together for a memoir of Robert Earl of Cornwall, his character stands out in honorable distinction from those of his brothers, neither surrounded by the "guilty glory" of the King, nor blackened by the baseness of the Bishop.

* Mr. Freeman appears to have mistaken this date for the original one of the Charter, and consequently demurs to its authenticity; but it is clear from the names of the witnesses that it must have been executed in Normandy, and the note appended to it in the Monasticon refers merely to a confirmation some years afterwards,—"Firmata atque roboratur est hæc carta anno millesimo octagesimo quinto apud Pevensel," in Robert's own castle.

CHAPTER IV.

EUDES DE CHAMPAGNE. | WILLIAM DE WARREN.
DROGO DE BREVERE. | GUY DE LA VAL.

NEXT to the brothers of the Conqueror I have selected for notice four of his companions allied to him by marriage, firstly, because an account of them forms a portion of his family history, and secondly, because recent researches enable us to rectify some serious errors which have been repeated for centuries by French as well as English writers, until they have become as it were stereotyped in our national annals.

Amongst the principal personages in the host at Hastings, Master Wace mentions,

"Cil ki ert Sire d'Aubermare,"

without any indication of who the Lord of Aumale or Albemarle was at that period.

Monsieur Auguste le Prévost has a confused note on this passage, and was unacquainted with the facts which the industry of the late Mr. Stapleton has fortunately furnished us with.

EUDES, OR ODO DE CHAMPAGNE

was the son of Etienne II., Comte de Champagne and Brie, by Adele, supposed to have been a daughter of Richard II., Duke of Normandy, but by which of his wives or mistresses has not been ascertained. Now if such were the fact, Odo was the nephew of Duke Robert, the father of the Conqueror, and consequently first cousin of the latter and of his sister Adelaide or Adeliza, as far as blood was concerned. A marriage with her, therefore, would have been within the prohibited degrees so rigidly construed by the Church of Rome. William of Jumiéges, who styles him Count of Champagne, says he was nearly allied to King William by consanguinity, being grandson of Maud, daughter to Richard I., Duke of Normandy, wife of Odo, Earl of Blois and Chartres. This assertion is still more unfortunate, for Maud died childless, and Etienne, the father of our Odo, was the son of the Count of Blois' second wife Ermengarde, daughter of Robert I., Count of Auvergne, whom he married in 1020. I therefore deny the maternal descent of Odo from any near relation of William, Duke of Normandy, of whom he has been set down as a kinsman on the above authority only.

Dugdale, who appears to have been perfectly be-

wildered respecting him, has printed in his Monasticon two accounts, one from the Book of Meaux, an abbey in Holderness, and the other from the Register of Fountains Abbey, which is nearly verbatim, but in one or two instances more explicit.

The story as told in them is as follows:—Odo having killed a magnate of his own country, took refuge in the dominions of his kinsman, William, Duke of Normandy, who gave him, through the intercession of the Archbishop of Rouen, his sister for wife, and subsequently bestowed upon him the island (according to the Book of Meaux), the county (according to the Register of Fountains), of Holderness. To the same Archbishop, not named, he is said to have been indebted for the grant of the county "comitatum" (the Register of Fountains reads "civitatem") of Albemarle on condition that he should attend the primate in any expedition with ten knights, and bear his standard before him.

The author of "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates," and Père Anselm, follow this account, but specify the Archbishop as Jean de Bayeux, who entertained a great friendship for Odo, and, with the consent of the Chapter, bestowed upon him the lands of Aumale on the above-named condition.

Now let us see what light the crucial test of dates

flings upon these statements. Etienne, the father of Odo, could not have been born earlier than 1021, and would have been about sixteen or seventeen when he succeeded his father in 1037 as Comte de Champagne and Brie. Allowing that he married before he was of full age, say 1040, Odo must have been a mere child at his death in 1047-8, when he was immediately dispossessed of his inheritance by his uncle, Thibaut III., legally, it would appear, according to the law at that period, which, if the heir to the lordship was not of sufficient age to receive investiture by the ceremony of girding with the sword, authorized the nearest in blood of full age to claim the succession. Sharp practice, it may be said, but still the law, and one, it may be worth remarking, which would justify the rebellions against William in the first years of his rule had he even been legitimate.

At what time Odo took refuge in the Court of William, Duke of Normandy, is not stated, but he must have been a most precocious young swashbuckler if he killed "a magnate of his own country" before he entered his teens, and the loss of his estates would have been quite sufficient to have caused him at a later period to seek his fortune elsewhere, without having killed anyone fairly or foully.

At the time of the invasion of England Odo would

have been about five-and-twenty, and what more likely than, having nothing to lose and everything to gain, he should eagerly have volunteered his services to William? But if we are to believe that Odo was indebted to Jean de Bayeux for the hand of his wife and the lands of Aumale, how could he be the "Sire d'Aubemare" who fought at Senlac in 1066, when the said Jean de Bayeux was not elevated to the primacy till after the death of Archbishop Maurilius in 1067?

The labours of Mr. Stapleton before alluded to, and those of the authors of "Recherches sur le Domesday," enable us to solve the riddle in the most satisfactory manner. The old Norman Chroniclers state clearly enough that Odo de Champagne was the husband of the Conqueror's sister, though differing as to the fact of her being of the whole or the half blood, but not one of them had the kindness to inform us, if they knew, that the lady had been twice previously married, and had left issue by each husband.

The facts of the case, which have been elicited from the records of the Church of St. Martin d'Auchi (de Alceio), commonly called of Aumale, from its vicinity to the town of that name, are as follows:— In or about the year 1000 a castle was built on the river Eu, now known as the Bresle, at the point where it divides the provinces of Normandy and Picardy, by

a certain Gherinfroi (Guerinfrides), who also, in 1027, founded in its neighbourhood the Abbey of St. Martin d'Auchi. This Gueriufroi, who was Sire d'Aumale (not Count, as he has been incorrectly called), had an only daughter named Berta, who became the wife of Hugh II., Comte de Ponthieu, and mother by him of Enguerrand, or Ingleram, Sire d'Aumale in right of his mother, who married Adelaide, sister of the Conqueror, and was killed in an ambush at St. Aubin, near Arques, in 1053, leaving an only daughter, named Adelaide after her mother, and having settled on his wife the lands of Aumale in dower. The widow of Enguerrand, being still young, married secondly, and in the first year of her widowhood, Lambert, Count of Lens, in Artois, and brother of Eustace II., Count of Boulogne, and had by him a daughter, named Judith, whose hand was given by her uncle, William the Conqueror, to Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland. Count Lambert could scarcely have seen the birth of his child, for he was killed at Lille the following year, in a battle between Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and the Emperor Henry III. A widow for the second time, and still in the prime of life, she married, thirdly, Odo of Champagne, by whom she was the mother of Stephen, who, on the death of his elder sister Adelaide, became the first Comte

d'Aumale, or Earl of Albemarle, the Seigneurie having been made a Comté by King William, but upon what occasion and at what time we have no evidence.

The name of Adeliza with the title of "Comitissa de Albemarle" occurs in Domesday, but not that of Odo, which first appears in connection with English transactions in 1088 (1st of William Rufus), when Count Odo and his son Stephen gave the manor and church of Hornsea, in the wapentake of Holderness, to the Abbey of St. Mary of York.

This latter fact also leads to the correction of Orderic Vital's assertion, that King William granted the *earldom* of Holderness to Odo of Champagne at the same time that he distributed cities and counties with great honours and domains among other lords who had assisted him in the Conquest, viz., in 1070. In the first place, Holderness was not an earldom; and in the second, as late as the completion of Domesday, A.D. 1086, the whole district so named was still part of the honour of Drogo de Brevere, a Fleming who had fought for William at Senlac, and received the greater part of the territory of Holderness amongst other portions of the spoil.

The gift of the lands (Dugdale says, of the city) of Aumale to Odo by the Archbishop of Rouen has also to be explained, for as Jean de Bayeux, if it were he,

as stated by the author of "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates," was not advanced to the primacy before 1067, such donation could not have been made previous to the invasion of England, at which period, and as late as 1086, the city and Castle of Aumale, with such lands as had not been given to the church of Auchi, were in possession of Adeliza, as Lady or Countess of Aumale, the wife, or if she were deceased, the step-daughter of that very Odo.

It depends therefore entirely upon the date of Odo's marriage, whether it was he who, in 1066, was the "Sire d'Aubemare" (in right of his wife) alluded to by the rhyming chronicler as a combatant in the great battle. The evidence brought to light by the industry of Mr. Stapleton, and published by him in the 23rd vol. of the Archæologia, supplemented by his letter to the late Sir Charles G. Young, Garter-King-of-Arms, and communicated by the latter to the "Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica," vol. vi. p. 265, and also set forth by Mr. Stapleton in his notes on the Norman rolls of the Exchequer, has been epitomized by the authors of "Recherches sur le Domesday," published in 1842, and it is singular, therefore, that the information of the triple marriage of the Countess of Ponthieu should have escaped the vigilance of Mr. Freeman, who has been led by Mr.

Stapleton into the serious error which his later discoveries allowed him to correct, of making Odo the husband of the younger Adelaide, who at the time the record was written had succeeded, as daughter and sole heir of Count Enguerrand, to the "Suzeraineté" of Aumale.

Whether the expatriated Count of Champagne fleshed his maiden sword at Senlac or not, he appears to have made no mark either for good or for evil in the annals of this country till, misled by ambition, he was induced to join in the conspiracy the collapse of which has given him an unenviable reputation in them.

History is quite silent about him until after the death of the Conqueror, when we are told that Odo found himself embarrassed by his position as a feudatory of William Rufus in England and of Robert Court-heuse in Normandy. He owed allegiance to each; but how could he serve two masters who were at war with one another? He decided in favour of Rufus, and received an English garrison in his Castle of Aumale, which, in conjunction with his son Stephen, he enlarged and strengthened, at the expense of the royal treasury, on the invasion of Normandy by the Red King in 1090.

Five years afterwards, however, he joined in a

conspiracy with Robert de Mowbray, William d'Eu, and other disaffected nobles, to depose Rufus and place his own son Stephen d'Aumale upon the throne.

The conspiracy failing in consequence of timely warning having been given to the King, Odo and his son were both arrested, the former thrown into a prison, from which he never emerged alive, and the latter condemned to have his eyes put out; but the piteous prayers of his wife and family, to say nothing of the payment of a considerable sum of money, obtained a remission of his sentence and restoration to liberty. How long Odo lingered in his dungeon is unknown. The exact date of his death is as uncertain as nearly every other part of his history, but it is presumed to have taken place in 1108.

Dugdale says, "the lordships whereof he was possessed, as appears by the Conqueror's Survey, were only these," and he then enumerates certain manors, which, in "the Conqueror's Survey," are distinctly set down as held by Adeliza, Countess of Albemarle, Odo's name, as I have previously stated, not occurring in a single instance throughout the work; but Holderness, he adds, "was not given him till after that Survey." There he is right, as we shall find in the following notice of

DROGO DE BREVERE,

an undoubted companion of the Conqueror, whose name does not appear in the roll of Battle Abbey, but who is presumed to have been an ancestor of the De Brewers or Briweres, so powerful in the thirteenth century. According to the Book of Meaux and the Register of Fountains Abbey, which I have already quoted, this Drogo was a Fleming of approved valour, who came over to England with William, and received for his services the Isle of Holderness, on which he built the strong Castle of Skipsey, and other considerable estates in various counties, amongst them Bytham in Lincolnshire. By the same authorities he is said to have married a kinswoman of the King,—how related to him, or how named, is not stated, nor whether her hand had been bestowed upon him as part of the guerdon he had merited. Whoever she was, Drogo killed her—whether by accident or with *malice prepense*, does not appear in the indictment. His subsequent conduct, however, was that of a guilty man. He hastened to the King and pretended that he was desirous to take his wife to Flanders; but, not having sufficient money at command for the purpose, craved assistance from his royal connection. The King, not doubting his story, gave or

lent to him the sum requested, with which Drogo wisely made the best of his way to the coast, and took ship for the Low Countries. The King on learning the truth sent orders for his arrest, but too late. Drogo was beyond his reach. He lost no time, however, in seizing his estates, some of which he appears to have bestowed on Odo of Champagne, who, according to the same writers, is said to have complained that the soil of Holderness was sterile and would grow nothing but oats; and his wife having presented him with a son, named Stephen, he prayed the Conqueror to give him some land on which he could grow wheat, that he might feed his (William's) nephew; whereupon the King gave him Bytham, another forfeited manor of Drogo's, and other places.

Now, if the story about Drogo be true, the slaying of his wife and flight to Flanders must have taken place late in 1086, for up to August in that year he was in possession of all his estates, and shortly afterwards William quitted England never to see it more. Drogo's personal interview with him must, therefore, have been during the few months that elapsed between the completion of the survey and the King's sailing for Normandy; either at the time of his holding his last great Witan at Salisbury (1st August), to which all the principal landholders in the kingdom were sum-

moned, or while he was subsequently residing in the Isle of Wight, waiting the collection of the money extorted from all against whom he could bring any charge, whether by right or otherwise—that final robbery of his English subjects, with the booty of which he departed, amid "curses not loud but deep," to die deserted, dishonoured, and despoiled in his native land.

The grant of Holderness to Odo has just the same narrow chance of having been made in England at that period, and the additional one of Bytham a few months later in Normandy, which shows how little reliance can be placed on the story that the complaint respecting the soil of Holderness was made to the King at Odo's request by "the same Archbishop" to whose good offices he had been indebted for the hand of his wife and the city or county of Aumale. Jean de Bayeux died 1079, seven years at least before the grant of Holderness to Odo. Bytham, originally held of the King by Drogo, was probably given to Odo at the same time or shortly afterwards, and was one of the many manors in England with which his son Stephen endowed the monastery of Aumale, he being the first who described himself as "Albemarlensis Comes," his father never assuming that title, but invariably granting or witnessing

charters as "Odo de Campania," or "Odonis Comitis de Campania."

Of his step-daughter, the younger Adelaide or Adeliza, Countess of Aumale, we know nothing beyond her confirmation of the grants of her mother and father to the Abbey of St. Martin d'Auchi (or Aumale). She must, however, have died unmarried or without issue, when her rights and title devolved solely upon her half-brother Stephen.

It is most remarkable, considering the position and connections of Adeliza, sister of the Conqueror and Countess of Ponthieu, that the discovery of her triple marriage should have been left to reward the diligence of an English antiquary of the nineteenth century. Every previous account of her and her issue being, from the ignorance of that simple fact, full of errors and contradictions. The date of her death is still unknown; but she was living in 1080, when she witnessed a charter of her aunt Adeliza, sister of Duke Robert II., and died before 1085, her daughter the younger Countess Adeliza having then presumably succeeded to the suzerainty of Aumale, and being the tenant in Domesday.

A name more familiar to us generally than either of the two preceding is that of the companion I have next to notice.

WILLIAM DE WARREN,

" De Garenes i vint Willeme "

is all we learn from Wace about his appearance at Hastings, except that his helmet fitted him admirably,

" Mult li sist bien et chief li helme ;"

for the mention of which interesting circumstance I suspect the gallant knight is more indebted to rhyme than to record—to the art of poetry rather than to the skill of his armourer. Fortunately we have made his acquaintance some time previous to the Conquest, and there are circumstances of much more importance and interest connected with him than the well-fitting of his helmet. His parentage has been variously represented, and that of his wife the subject of the keenest controversy.

To begin with the beginning. Without bewildering the reader with the conflicting accounts of the early contemporary chroniclers, and the unsatisfactory conclusions of more recent writers, I will at once refer to the earliest mention of William de Warren in history that I am aware of, which occurs in Orderic Vital's account of the battle of Mortemer and its results in 1054. " Duke William," he tells us, " being enraged by the shelter and safe conduct granted by Roger de

Mortemer, who commanded the Norman forces on that occasion, to the Comte de Montdidier, who had fought on the side of the French and taken refuge in the Castle of Mortemer, banished Roger from Normandy and confiscated all his possessions;" but being afterwards reconciled to him he restored them to him, with the exception of the Castle of Mortemer, which the Duke gave to William de Warren, "one of his loyal young vassals," whom Orderic makes the Conqueror describe as a cousin or kinsman of De Mortemer, acknowledging no consanguinity to himself.

The probabilities are that he was the son of a Ralph de Warren, a benefactor to the abbey of La Trinité du Mont about the middle of the 11th century, who, as well as Roger de Mortemer, Nicholas de Basqueville, Walter de St. Martin, and many others, were the issue of some of the numerous nieces of the Duchess Gonnor ("Nepotes plures predicta Gunnora"), who have been inaccurately set down as kinsmen instead of distant connections of her great-grandson the Conqueror.

William de Warren, to whom the Duke of Normandy gave the Castle of Mortemer, was a young man, we are told, at that period, and would, therefore, scarcely have attained the prime of life in 1066. He is named amongst the principal persons summoned to attend the Council at Lillebonne, when

the invasion of England was decided upon, and was no doubt present in the great battle, for his services in which he received as his share of the spoil some three hundred manors, nearly half that number being in the county of Norfolk.

In 1067, on the King's departure for Normandy, William de Warren was joined with Hugh de Grentmesnil, Hugh de Montfort, and other valiant men in the government of England, under the superior jurisdiction of the Earl-bishop Odo and William Fitz Osbern.

In 1074, on the breaking out of the rebellion of Roger, Earl of Hereford, and Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, we find him associated with Richard de Bienfaite as Chief Justiciaries of England, and summoning the rebels to appear before the King's High Court; and on their refusal, William de Warren with Robert, son of William Malet, marched against Earl Ralph, and routing the rebels at Fagadune, pursued them to Norwich, taking many prisoners, whom, according to the barbarous practice of the age, they mutilated by chopping off the right foot—an unmistakable proof that the sufferers had taken a step in the wrong direction.

Of his personal prowess no special anecdote has been preserved, and it is as the husband of the mys-

terious Gundred, or Gundrada, that his name has descended to the present day with any special interest attached to it.

Whether the hand of this lady was bestowed upon him previously to his services at Senlac, or as a part of his reward for them, does not appear, and our ignorance of the date of their marriage has been the principal obstacle in the way of those who have so hotly disputed her relationship to William the Conqueror, for could we even arrive at an approximate date it might enable us to calculate her probable age at that period, and whether she was born before or after 1053, on which fact depends the whole question.

That they were married before 1078 is certain, as in that year they founded the Priory of Lewes in Sussex, and we have the charters of King William, which he granted to that establishment for the health of the souls of his lord and ancestor, King Edward, of his father Count Robert, of his own soul and that of his wife, Queen Matilda, and of all *their* children and successors, and for the souls of William de Warren and his wife Gundrada, *his* (*William's*) *daughter* and their heirs.

The words "*my* daughter"—"filiæ meæ"—would be decisive of her being the acknowledged child of the King; but independently of their being scarcely

legible, it is contended that they are in a different and later hand; and there is this to be observed, which I do not remember having seen noticed, that the King has just previously used the expression "*our* children and successors" (filiorum atque successorum *nostrorum*"), so that his particularising Gundrada as "*my* daughter" would imply that she was not by his wife Matilda.

Exactly in opposition to this is the declaration of William de Warren himself, in whose charter to the priory, granted after the death of Gundred in childbirth (6 kalends of June, 1085), he states his donations to be for the salvation of the souls, amongst others, of his lady Queen Matilda, mother of his wife ("matris uxoris meæ"), excluding in turn King William from any share in her parentage. Was she then the sister of Gherbod the Fleming, Earl of Chester, as Orderic Vital distinctly describes her, without the slightest allusion to her parents? And, if so, was Queen Matilda the mother of both by a previous marriage, which has been utterly ignored by contemporary writers, and never yet established by recent investigators? Mr. Freeman accepts that interpretation, and I can advance no argument in dispute of it. It is much more likely, as he observes, that a stepfather should call the daughter of his wife his daughter, than that a hus-

band should speak of the mother of his wife in anything but a strictly literal sense.

Then how are we to account for the universal silence of the chroniclers, native and foreign, on the subject? Mr. Freeman quotes the instance of their apparent ignorance of the marriage of Robert the Devil with the widow of Ulf; but this is a much more important case. We have the unequivocal declaration of William de Warren, that Queen Matilda was the mother of his wife, and unless that charter is spurious, of which there is not the slightest suspicion, the evidence to that extent is conclusive.

But we have not yet done with riddles. Amongst the benefactors of Bermondsey, I find one Richard Guett, recorded as brother of the Countess of Warren, and the donor of the manor of Cowyke to the monks of that abbey, 11th of Rufus, A.D. 1098.

Gundred at that period had been dead thirteen years; but that she is the person alluded to there can be no doubt, as she is styled only "Comitissæ Warenne;" whereas Isabelle de Vermandois, wife of her son, the second William, was Countess of Warren and *Surrey*.

Then who was this Richard Guett? Was he another child of Matilda of Flanders, a brother or half-brother of Gherbod and Gundred, or a brother-in-law,

for the old writers pay little attention to these nice distinctions, as we have seen in the case of Odo of Champagne? Had Matilda of Flanders as many husbands as Adelaide, Countess of Ponthieu, and, like her, issue by each? What was the real cause of the inhibition of her marriage with William, Duke of Normandy,—its delay for six years? What truth is there in the story of her unreturned affection for the Anglo-Saxon Brihtric Meaw, and of her vindictive conduct to him after she became Queen of England? I have hesitated to believe in the popular tradition that Duke William grossly assaulted the daughter of Baldwin in the street or in her own chamber, not that I have any doubt about his being capable of such an outrage, but because he was too politic to commit it, and she was not the woman to have forgiven it, assuming that the offence was the simple refusal of his hand on the ground of his illegitimacy. It is obvious, however, that the early life of Matilda is involved in mystery, and it is highly probable that a clearer insight into it would enable us to account for much which we now reject as legend, or fail to reconcile with acknowledged facts. If there be any foundation for the story of William's brutality, the outburst of ungovernable fury might have been due to a much greater provocation than has been assigned for it. Brihtric, the son

of Algar or Alfar, surnamed Meaw (Snow), from the extreme fairness of his complexion, an Anglo-Saxon Thegn, possessor of large domains in England, had been sent on an embassy from King Edward the Confessor to the Count of Flanders. Matilda, we are told, fell desperately in love with him, and offered herself to him in marriage! Either disgusted by her forwardness, or preferring another, he declined the flattering proposal. "Hell hath no fury like a woman foiled," and she kept her wrath warm till she was in a position to ruin the man she had so passionately loved. She had no sooner become the Queen of England than she induced William to confiscate, on some pretence, all Brihtric's estates, and obtained the greater proportion for herself. The unfortunate Thegn was arrested at his house at Hanley, in Worcestershire, on the very day Saint Wulfstan had consecrated a chapel of his building, dragged to Winchester, and died in a dungeon! The truth of this story is supported by the impartial evidence of Domesday, in which Hanley and the principal manors held by Brihtric in the time of King Edward are recorded as the possessions of Queen Matilda, and the remainder passed to Fitz Hamon.

After her hand had been rejected by the noble Saxon, it is presumed she became the wife of a Fleming,

named Gherbod, who appears to have held the hereditary office of Advocate of the Abbey of Saint Bertin, in St. Omers, and by whom she had at least two children, viz., Gherbod, to whom William gave the earldom of Chester, and Gundred, "the sister of Gherbod," and wife of William de Warren. Was this a clandestine or an informal marriage, which, as it has never been acknowledged by any chronicler, contemporary or other, might have been unknown to the Duke of Normandy, when he proposed to one whom he believed to be the maiden daughter of the Count of Flanders, and the corporal chastisement inflicted, however unworthy of a man, passed over, *sub silentio*, for prudential reasons, by the parties who had been guilty of a disgraceful suppression of facts? The subsequent marriage under such circumstances will awaken no surprise in any one who has studied the character of William. Utterly unscrupulous, destitute of every generous, noble, or delicate feeling, every action of his life was dictated by POLICY alone. An alliance with the Count of Flanders might be considered by the crafty schemer sufficiently advantageous to warrant his overlooking any objectionable antecedents in the conduct of a granddaughter of a king of France, his first discovery of which had provoked his savage

nature into a momentary ebullition of fury. Her being the mother of two children was a point in her favour with a man whose sole motive for marrying was the perpetuation of a dynasty, and the fair prospect of legitimate issue, in whose veins the blood of the Capets should enrich that of the Furrier of Falaise, would overcome any hesitation at espousing the widow of an Advocate of St. Bertin. On the other hand, Count Baldwin would be too happy to embrace the opportunity of reinstating his daughter in a position befitting her birth, and, as well as the lady herself, gladly condone past insults for future advantages and the hope of smothering, in the splendour of a ducal wedding, the awkward whispers of scandal.

I have said thus much simply to show the view that may be taken of these mysterious circumstances, in opposition to the rose-coloured representations of some modern historians, who, upon no stronger evidence, elevate the Conqueror into a model husband, and describe Matilda as the perfection of womankind. To return to Gundred: her mother, Matilda, the third child of parents who were married in 1027, could not well have been born before 1030, and would therefore be some three years younger than the Conqueror.

In 1047, the time named as that of the Duke's first proposal, she would have been seventeen, and at that

age either passionately in love with Brihtric, or already the youthful bride of the Advocate of St. Bertin.

In either case her rejection of William—and in the latter the Papal inhibition—is perfectly understandable. Assuming the marriage, she could scarcely have been the mother of the younger Gherbod and his sister Gundred before 1050; and the Countess of Warren, who died in childbed in 1085, would, according to this calculation, have then been in her thirty-fifth year. These dates are fairly presumable, and are uncontradicted by any circumstances that I am aware of.

No date has ever been assigned to the marriage of Gundred, but it is probable that it took place subsequent to the invasion, and about the same time that the earldom of Chester was bestowed on her brother Gherbod, with whom she may have come to England in the train of their mother, Matilda, on her visit in 1068, for there is not the slightest trace of Gherbod's presence at Hastings; and the magnificent gift of the County Palatine of Chester to a foreigner unknown to fame must have been owing to private family influence, as no service of any description is recorded for which it could be considered a merited reward.

In the foundation charter to Lewes, William de Warren himself tells us that he set out with his wife,

Gundred, on a journey to Rome, but was unable to pass the German frontier in consequence of the war raging between the Emperor and the Pope. They therefore visited the Abbey of Cluni, where they were most hospitably entertained by the Prior and the community in the absence of Hugh, the Abbot. No date is mentioned, but the circumstances to which he alludes enable us to arrive at an approximate one.

The quarrel between Gregory VII. and the Emperor Henry IV. commenced in 1076, when, in the Council of Rome, in answer to Henry's deposition of the Pope in the Council of Worms, 23rd of January in that year, sentence of excommunication was passed upon the contumacious Kaiser, and his subjects absolved from their oath of fidelity; and in the following year, Henry, accompanied by his wife and infant son, Conrad, presented himself as a penitent before the walls of the Castle of Canossa, in Lombardy, where the Pontiff was then residing; and after remaining for three days, with naked feet and without food, in token of his contrition, was admitted, on the fourth, to the presence of the triumphant Pontiff, in consequence of the mediation of his cousin, the Countess Matilda, the Count of Savoy, and the *Abbot of Cluni*, who were at that period at Canossa with his Holiness.

This latter event occurred on the 26th of January,

1077, and we therefore know that Abbot Hugh was then in Lombardy. How long he was absent from Cluni on that occasion I cannot say, but we may fairly conjecture that William and Gundred were the guests of the Prior towards the close of the year 1076, or in the early part of 1077, in which latter year, they having long before resolved to found some religious house for the welfare of their souls, determined that, in gratitude for their reception at the Abbey of Cluni, it should rather be of the Cluniac order than any other. Having obtained the licence of King William, Abbot Hugh, at their request, sent over four of his monks, the principal of whom, named Lanzo, became the first Prior of St. Pancras at Lewes, which was founded and endowed by the Earl accordingly.

The Countess died, as before stated, in 1085, and was buried in the chapter-house at Lewes.

On the breaking out of Bishop Odo's rebellion, in the first year of the reign of Rufus, William, Earl of Warren, stood fast by the King, and served him most loyally both in the field and the council-chamber, for which good service he was created Earl of Surrey.

He enjoyed his new dignity but for a brief period, dying in 1089, 8 kalends of July (where, or of what disorder, is not stated), and was buried near his wife in the chapter-house of Lewes.

The discovery of their coffins a few years ago raised the controversy respecting the parentage of Gundred, which can scarcely even now be considered absolutely decided.

As in the case of Adelaide, Countess of Ponthieu, some charter or trustworthy document may yet be discovered which will clear up, by a simple fact, the mystery surrounding the early life of the Queen of the Conqueror, and not only enable us correctly to affiliate Gherbod and Gundred, but also to identify the hitherto unnoticed claimant to the honour of being one of their nearest relations, Richard Guett, the benefactor of Bermondsey, "brother of the Countess of Warren."

From the register of Ely, in the Bodleian Library, Dugdale quotes the following tale of wonder:—"It is reported that this Earl William did violently detain certain lands from the monks of Ely, for which, being after admonished by the Abbot, and not making restitution, he died miserably; and though his death happened very far off the Isle of Ely, the same night he died, the Abbot, lying quietly in his bed, and meditating on heavenly things, heard the soul of the Earl in its carriage away by the Devil, cry out loudly and with a known and distinct voice, 'Lord have mercy upon me! Lord have mercy upon me!' and moreover that the next day the Abbot acquainted all the monks

in Chapter therewith; and, likewise, that about four days after there came a messenger to them from the wife of the Earl with one hundred shillings for the good of his soul, who told them that he died the very hour the Abbot heard that outcry; but that neither the Abbot nor any of the monks would receive it, not thinking it safe for them to take the money of a damned person."

"If the first part of this story," adds honest old Norroy, "as the Abbot's hearing that noise, be no truer than the last, viz., that his lady sent them one hundred shillings, I shall deem it to be a mere fiction in regard the lady was certainly dead about three years before."

What appears more incredible to me is that there was not one monk to be found in the convent who would pocket the money "for the good of the soul" of the departed delinquent, who had "died miserably," —a statement which, taken in conjunction with the preternatural communication of the event to the holy Abbot, conveys to my mind an ugly idea of a guilty foreknowledge of it.

GUY DE LA VAL.

I shall conclude this chapter with a notice of a companion and connection of the Conqueror, about

whom there is no mystery, and consequently I fear little interest.

Laval, or Laval Guion, is a town of some importance in the south of the province of Maine. At the time of the Conquest the Seigneur de la Val was Guy II., who, in 1066, when considerably stricken in years, confirmed certain grants made to the Abbey of Marmoutier by a son named Jean, who at the age of three-and-twenty had assumed the monastic habit in that establishment. Hamon, his second son, was at that date the father of Guy, afterwards the third of that name, called the Young and the Bald, and both of them joined the forces raised by William Duke of Normandy for the invasion of England.

Hamon received for his services several lands, which were inherited by his descendants down to the reign of John, and his son Guy was rewarded by the Conqueror, in 1078, with the hand of his niece Denise, daughter of Robert, Earl of Mortain and Cornwall.

Hamon succeeded his father, Guy II., in the lordship of Laval, the year after the Conquest, and died in 1080, when his son Guy became Sire de la Val, and subsequently losing his wife Denise, remarried with a lady named Cécile, supposed to have been a kinswoman of the Counts of Mayenne. He died in 1095,

and was buried at Marmoutier beside his first wife.

The fact that neither the name of Drogo de Brevere or De la Val, father or son, is to be found on the Roll of Battle Abbey is tolerable evidence of the dependence to be placed upon it.

CHAPTER V.

EUSTACE II., COUNT OF BOULOGNE.
WALTER GIFFARD.
HUGH DE MONTFORT.

My object in selecting the above three companions of the Conqueror for the subject of this chapter is to vindicate them from an accusation brought against them by an anonymous writer, who, though he may have been contemporaneous, I consider very unworthy the trust that has recently been placed in him. I shall, however, reserve my defence for the close of each memoir, after I have made my readers better acquainted with the personages themselves.

First, therefore, respecting

EUSTACE II., COUNT OF BOULOGNE.

He was the son of Eustace I. and Mahaut, daughter of Lambert the Bearded, Count of Louvain, and succeeded his father in or about 1047, being distinguished from him, who was called "à l'œil" ("with the eye")

by the sobriquet of "aux Grenons," or "Als Gernons" ("with the whiskers"), the origin of the modern name of Algernon.

In 1050 he married Goda, daughter of Ethelred II., King of England, and widow of Gauthier, Count of Mantes, and in the following year, in the month of September, crossed the Channel from Wissant to Dover, on a visit to his brother-in-law, King Edward the Confessor, who was then at Gloucester. Returning *via* Canterbury and Dover, one of his attendants killed an inhabitant of the latter place, who had refused him a lodging, and was himself slain by a townsman, who avenged the deed.

The brawl soon swelled into a tumult. The English flew to arms, and attacked the Count and his followers, who fought for their lives, and, fearfully outnumbered, were at length compelled to flee for them. Roger of Wendover says this incident occurred on his first landing at Dover, and that the Count and his followers in their wrath slew a great number of men and women, and trod the children under their horses' feet. William of Malmesbury, who lays the scene at Canterbury, says that Eustace, on hearing of the murder of his servant, proceeded with all his retinue to avenge it, and killed the perpetrator of the crime and eighteen others; that the citizens, flying to arms, he lost twenty-one of his

people, and had multitudes wounded (Roger of Wendover says he lost eighty men), himself and one companion with difficulty making their escape in the confusion. King Edward, on hearing from Eustace his account of the circumstances, sent for Earl Godwin, and ordered him to march with sufficient forces into Kent and punish the offenders. The Saxon Earl, jealous of the favour constantly shown to the Normans by King Edward, remonstrated, and subsequently taking up arms, demanded that the Count and his followers should be delivered up to him for trial, the affair resulting, after much altercation, in the banishment of Godwin and his family.

Much obloquy has been heaped upon Eustace for his conduct upon this occasion; but large allowance must be made for the bias of the English against the Normans, and save and except the main facts of the affray, the versions of it are too conflicting to enable us at the present day to come to any definite conclusion on the subject.

Returned to his dominions, Count Eustace, in 1053, gave an asylum to William Count of Talou and his family, who had been expelled from Normandy by Duke William, and in 1054 he succeeded his brother Lambert, the second husband of the Duke's sister, in the lordship of Lens, according to the same law which

gave the county of Champagne to Thibaut, Count of Blois and Chartres, to the exclusion of Odo, the only child of Lambert being an infant in her cradle.

About the same period the Countess Goda died, whether without issue by Eustace is not satisfactorily settled, and in 1056, after escorting Pope Victor II. to Rome from the Council of Cologne, he returned through Lower Lorraine, and paid a visit to its Duke, Geoffrey the Bearded, at Bouillon, where he saw and was captivated by the charms of the Duke's daughter, Ida, and received her hand in marriage, with the castle of Bouillon for her dowry.

The nuptials were celebrated at Cambrai in December, 1057, and the second of their three sons was the famous "Godfrey of Bouillon," King of Jerusalem, born in 1060.

In 1066, Count Eustace was one of the French nobles who joined the army of the Conqueror, and of whose presence in the great conflict there can be no doubt. He is not only expressly named by William of Poitiers, and the author of the Latin poem of the battle of Hastings, but his conduct in the fight is particularly described, and he is also personally depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, the almost obliterated name of "Eustatius" over the figure having been detected

by that accurate and excellent artist, the late Mr. Stothard.

Wace simply mentions a "Wiestace d'Abevile," in which Monsieur le Prévost and Mr. Taylor hesitate to recognize the Count of Boulogne, in presence of the fact that both the Counts of Ponthieu and the Counts of Boulogne were occasionally called "of Abbeville."

Without, however, contesting this point, there is evidence enough that Eustace II. fought at Senlac, where at some period of the action he was grievously wounded. He is said to have advised William at a critical moment to retreat, and not rush upon certain death, counsel which the Conqueror was the last man to listen to. The stratagem of the feigned flight is also said to have been suggested by him, and on the Duke's second horse being killed under him, he dismounted and offered him his own. As darkness fell upon the fatal field, the headlong pursuit of the Normans led to a disaster which might have turned the scale in favour of the English. Unacquainted with the ground, a considerable body of the Norman cavalry, galloping down the north side of the hill of Senlac, suddenly found themselves floundering in a morass, and the flying foe, perceiving their hapless condition, turned upon them and slew the greater number.

The Norman panegyrist of the Conqueror tells us

that Count Eustace, imagining that the English had been strongly reinforced, rode back with fifty knights to William, and again advised him to retreat, when at the moment he was speaking he was struck by some one between the shoulder-blades with such violence that the blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, and he was borne from the field in a dying state. How and by whom such a blow—a blow which Orderic says was heard—could be struck at that moment upon that spot, even in the darkness, without the dealer of it being detected, I am at a loss to imagine. The enemy had been driven from that portion of the ground, and Eustace, with fifty knights at his back, was speaking confidentially to the Duke, who was certainly not without his own officers and attendants. They were both on horseback too, and so heavy a blow between the shoulder-blades could only have been dealt with a mace by a mounted man, or by one on foot with the long-handled axe of a Saxon soldier, and in neither case without observation, as the assailant must have been close to him, and could not have escaped instant death. Remember, it was on the summit of the hill, in the open air, with the sky for a background, and the darkness must have been Egyptian if the erect form of a man could escape the observation of so many surrounding friends and

followers. If there be any truth in the story, the incident occurred at an earlier period, during the confusion of the fight, in the midst of the *mêlée*, and not at the time stated by the writer.

I have dwelt upon this point because it will be found of importance hereafter.

That Count Eustace was rewarded for his services, whatever they may have been, for they are not particularized, by large grants of land in England there can be little doubt, but he speedily forfeited them by his attempt, in 1067, to seize Dover Castle, at the instigation of the disaffected men of Kent, during William's absence in Normandy; and though many manors were probably restored to him on his subsequent reconciliation with the Conqueror, they cannot at present be distinguished from those which were added to them at a later period, or might have been acquired by his son, Eustace III., who is the tenant recorded in Domesday, and at the time of its compilation was about twenty-seven. The attempt on Dover failed, through the loyalty of the royal garrison and the personal hostility to Eustace entertained by the townsmen from the recollection of the fatal affray in 1051. A vigorous sally on the besiegers compelled them to retreat, and a report that Bishop Odo was advancing with a large force, created a panic that sent

them flying in confusion back to their ships, which few of them reached in safety, many being slain, and more taken prisoners, amongst whom William of Poitiers mentions a young nephew of Eustace, of whose name or subsequent fate we have no information.

Eustace himself contrived to escape to his own country, but on the King's return to England in 1068, the Count of Boulogne was outlawed, and his honours and lands in this country forfeited. By what means he regained the favour and friendship of the Conqueror is unknown. William seems never to have thoroughly trusted him, as he took hostages for his good behaviour before the expedition to Hastings, and now, after this overt act of treason, the avowed object of which was to deprive him of his hardly won crown, forgiveness was out of the question, except from motives of that crafty policy which was throughout his life the sole guide of the Conqueror's conduct. What those motives were on this occasion must be left to conjecture, but Eustace was a dangerous neighbour, and owed fealty to Philip I., King of France, as well as to William I., King of England. It was at the instigation of the former over-lord that he had broken with the latter and allied himself with the Kentish insurgents, and William may have thought no price too dear to secure at least his neutrality in prospect of a war with France.

In 1071 he espoused the cause of Richilde and her son, Baldwin, Count of Flanders, and in the February of that year defeated their competitor, Robert the Frison, at Montcassel, and, pursuing him to St. Omer, took him prisoner. On regaining his liberty some few months afterwards, Robert in his turn defeated Eustace, and took him prisoner at the battle of Broqueroie.

Godfrey, the brother of Eustace, Chancellor of France and Bishop of Paris, ransomed him, and Robert, to obtain his alliance, ceded to him the Forest of Bethlo and the Castle of Sperli.

Various dates have been given of his death. One writer placing it in 1065, in which case he could not have fought at Senlac. The "Art de Vérifier les Dates," which denies this and also the date of 1080, given by another author, prolongs his existence to 1093; but no authority is quoted, and the probability is in favour of 1080, as the late Sir Henry Ellis cites a charter in which Ida, the second wife of this Eustace, is described as a widow in 1081. The point is of great importance, because if he did not die till 1093, he must have been the Count Eustace of Boulogne who was implicated in the rebellion against Rufus in 1088 (as stated by the compilers of the great work above mentioned), and also the Count Eustace of Domesday, which I think it is perfectly clear he was not.

The author of "Carmen de Bello," said to have been Guy, Bishop of Amiens, recounts with great gusto a barbarous outrage committed by Eustace and three other knights—namely, Walter Giffard, Hugh de Montfort, and some one he calls "the heir of Pontlieu" ["Pontivi nobilis hæres"], on the still breathing but mortally-wounded Harold, who, pierced through the right eye by a falling arrow, had sunk in agony at the foot of his standard. One knight thrust his lance through the shield of the dying King, and stabbed him in the breast; another assailant finished the work by striking off his head with his sword: but even this vengeance was not enough; a third pierced the dead body and scattered about the entrails; the fourth coming, it would seem, too late for any more efficient share in the deed, cut off the king's leg as he lay dead!

Mr. Freeman, while reprobating in a proper spirit this "inglorious exploit," accepts it as a matter of fact, though it is not alluded to by any other contemporary, and is partially contradicted by their accounts of the death of Harold.

I place no faith in it whatever. William of Poitiers is silent altogether on the subject; Orderic simply says, "Harold was slain in the first onset." From Wace we receive the earliest account of the fall of the

arrow, of Harold's attempting to extract it, and breaking the shaft; of his leaning for support, in his agony, on his shield, and being attacked by *two* knights, one of whom struck him down by a blow on the head, and the other, as he attempted to regain his footing, severely wounded him in the thigh, which was cut to the bone; but he honestly adds that by whose arm he was slain he knew not, and never heard. The Bayeux Tapestry corroborates this account. Harold is first depicted with the fatal arrow in his eye, and then prostrate in front of a knight who, as he is *attempting to rise* (the action is unmistakable) is dealing him a blow on the thigh with his long Norman sword.

William of Malmesbury says that Harold fell from having his brain pierced with an arrow from a distance, and that one of the soldiers with a sword gashed his thigh as he lay prostrate, for which shameful and cowardly action he was branded with ignominy by William and dismissed the service.

Who was this nameless soldier? Certainly not one of the noble and distinguished warriors on whom the Latin libeller has flung his wretched calumnies. Who was the heir of Ponthieu he speaks of? Mr. Freeman says: "Nor are we amazed to find the son of Guy of Ponthieu foremost in showing despite to the man who

had once been his father's prisoner." Why?—what had Harold done to injure Guy of Ponthieu? He was the injured, not the offender! Guy I., Count of Ponthieu, who arrested Harold when thrown upon his coast in 1062, had succeeded his brother Enguerrand II., who was slain before Arques in 1053, and died *circa* 1100, leaving by his wife Ada, who died before him, an only child, Agnes, married to Robert de Belesme. He is said to have had a son named Ivo, whom he had associated with himself in the government, but the boy as well as his mother preceded him to the grave, and the heir of Ponthieu in 1066 was, if not this young Ivo—in which case I give the Bishop joy of his great nephew—no other than the Bishop himself! As regards the person who is the especial subject of this memoir, the "cowardly" Eustace Count of Boulogne—his share in the brutality, whatever it was, can only be brought home to him by some more credible witness than a romancer, who tells us that Duke William slew two thousand English at the battle of Hastings with his own hand! I have already expressed my doubts about the period of the battle when Eustace received the terrible blow in the back, which caused the blood to burst from his mouth and nostrils and, according to Orderic, to be "borne from the field in a dying state."

If this incident occurred in the heat and confusion of the fight—and otherwise it appears impossible—Eustace was not present at the fall of Harold. Under any circumstances, if he were, and had been guilty of one of the dastardly acts the Bishop celebrates, the detestation, deserved or not, which the English seem to have held him in, would have caused them to spread the scandal far and wide. When it is proved to me that an heir to the County of Ponthieu was in the battle, I will reconsider the evidence against the Count of Boulogne.

WALTER GIFFARD.

Here we have the name of an illustrious Norman, the progenitor of a race from which the noblest families in England are proud to trace their descent; and, strange to say, beyond this fact little or nothing is known about his own family which can be supported by credible authority. Even the origin of the name of Giffard, Gifford, or Giffart, as it is indifferently spelt, has yet to be definitively settled.

The story that has been so often told about it, viz., that it signified a free-handed or liberal giver, is without any substantial foundation, and is, I believe, one of the many which have been so detrimental to the study of genealogy and heraldry, by misleading the inquirer

or checking research altogether. It is upon the authority of William of Jumiéges that this Walter Giffart, the companion of the Conqueror, the first we know of that name, has been set down as a son of Osborn de Bolbec by his wife, indifferently called Avelina and Duvelina, sister of Gonnor, wife of Richard, Duke of Normandy. Granting this to be true, as we have no documentary evidence to contradict it, the appellation of Giffart or Gifford, appears to be one of those sobriquets founded on personal peculiarities so commonly applied to distinguish certain members of a family previous to the general establishment of hereditary surnames.

Instances of the practice are familiar to the veriest schoolboy, and in the preceding memoir I have mentioned Lambert the Bearded, Eustace with the Eye, and Eustace with the Whiskers. Hence the complimentary suggestion of "Free-Giver," which I should be happy to leave undisputed could it be borne out by etymology. The family, however, was Norman, not Saxon; and it is in the Norman-French, or Low-Latin of the eleventh century, that we must look for its derivation. The word occurs in both those dialects. In Roquefort's Dictionnaire de la Langue Romane, "*Giffarde*" is rendered "*Joufloue, qui à des grosses joues—servante de cuisine,*" the word being derived from

giffe "the cheek," *giffle* also signifying in the same language "un soufflet," or blow on the cheek. An old French poet, Gautier de Coisiny, complains that women of every class paint themselves, even the *torche-pot*, "scullion," and the *Giffarde*, "kitchen maid or cook." So in the new "Dictionnaire Franco-Normand," by M. George Métivier, we have "Giffair, rire comme un jouflou." And, to my great satisfaction, I find that this esteemed philologist has come to the same conclusion as myself, for under that word he has "Giffe, Giffle, Joue. 'Telle est l'origine de l'illustre famille Normande de Giffard, nom répandu très au-delà de cette Province (Jersey, of which Mons. Métivier is a native) et de nos îles." Vide also Ducange, sub voce "Giffardus," who has a similar interpretation, "Ancilla coquina." It is almost impossible to resist the conviction that Giffard, in the language of that day, signified a person with large cheeks, and was in consequence applied to a cook, who is popularly represented as fat and rubicund.

I beg to apologise to those of my readers who may not take any interest in such disquisitions, and hasten to the sayings and doings of Walter Giffard, with whom the name, whatever it meant, could not have originated, as an Osborne and a Berenger Giffard were his contemporaries, proving that the sobriquet

of an individual had become the appellation of a family.

We first hear of him in 1035, as a companion of Hugh de Gournay in the abortive attempt of Edward son of King Ethelred to recover the crown of England (*vide* vol. ii. p. 113), and next in 1053, when he was left by Duke William in command of the forces blockading the Castle of Arques, and at that period was Lord of Longueville, and already past the prime of life, judging by his account of himself only thirteen years afterwards. In the following year Wace informs us he was intrusted by the Duke with the defence of the district of Caux, in which Longueville is situate, on the occasion of the invasion of Normandy by Henry, King of France. Subsequently he appears to have made a pilgrimage to St. Iago de Compostella, in Spain, or may perhaps have been sent there by the Duke on some mission to Alfonso King of Galicia, to whom William afterwards affianced his daughter Agatha, after the breaking off of the match with the Saxon Prince Edwin. All we learn from Wace is that in the great battle William's first horse had been brought to him by Giffard from Spain, "the gift of a king who had a great friendship for him."

The Lord of Longueville accompanied his sovereign to England, having furnished his fleet, according to

the List published by Taylor, with thirty vessels and a hundred men.

Previous to the battle, Raoul de Conches, the hereditary standard-bearer of Normandy, having prayed quittance of service on that day, that he might fight with greater freedom in the field, the Duke called to him Walter Giffard, and desired him to bear his gonfanon, who also requested to be excused the honour on the plea of being too old and too feeble. "For the mercy of God, sire," said the old knight, "look upon my white and bald head; my strength is impaired, and I am short of breath," and in answer to the Duke's passionate reproaches, urged that he had a large contingent of men-at-arms in the field, whom he was bound to lead into action, and at the head of them he was ready to die in his sovereign's cause. Whereupon the Duke excused him, and assured him that he loved him more than ever, and that if he survived that day it should be the better for him (Walter) as long as he lived.

We hear of no special exploit performed by him during the battle, Benoît de St.-More merely saying that he was struck down in the *mêlée*, and rescued apparently by William himself. At its close, however, after Harold had been mortally wounded, this brave old Lord of Longueville, with his bald head and his

white locks, is accused of assisting to mutilate the body of the heroic King!

It would be an indignity to the noble veteran to defend him against so infamous a charge, and fortunately there is no need to do so, for it is unsupported by any evidence, and the accuser stands convicted of falsehood and exaggeration sufficient to deprive him of any character for honesty whatever.

When the fight was over, and the victorious Duke had ordered a space on the top of the hill to be cleared of the dead and dying, that his tent might be pitched there, and signified his intention to sup and sleep on the spot, Walter Giffard galloped up to him. "Sire," he said, "what are you about? You are surely not fitly placed here among the dead. Many an Englishman lies bleeding and mingled with the slain, but yet living, and though wounded, only waiting to rise at night and escape in the darkness. They would delight to take their revenge, and would sell their lives dearly, no one caring who killed him afterwards, so he but slew a Norman first, for they say we have done them great wrong. You should lodge elsewhere, guarded by one or two thousand men whom you can best trust. Let a careful watch be set this night, for we know not what snares may be laid for us. You have made a noble day of it, but I like to see the end

of the work." The Duke, however, adhered to his original determination. (*Roman de Rou.*)

There can be no doubt, I think, that this Walter Giffard who fought at Hastings was the person to whom William the Conqueror, in 1070, gave the earldom of Buckingham; for, old as he is said by Wace to have represented himself at that period, he lived nineteen years afterwards, and was one of the Commissioners intrusted by William to superintend the compilation of the great survey of England, and I can find no reason whatever for the ordinary assertion that his son, the second Walter, was the first earl.

There is evidence that in 1079 he founded the priory of St. Michel de Bolbec, and he is reported to have died about 1084, which we may fairly understand to be 1085, the year in which Domesday was begun and completed.

The wife of this Walter was Ermengarde, a daughter of Gerrard Flaitel, by whom he had a son, the second Walter, Earl of Buckingham, who died in 1102, and with whom he has been confounded. He had also a second son named William, who was Chancellor to William Rufus, made Bishop of Winchester by Henry I., 1107, and died in 1128, and a daughter, named Rohais or Rohesia, wife of Richard Fitz Gilbert, from whom descended the great house of Clare.

HUGH DE MONTFORT,

second of that name, and son of Hugh "with the Beard," Lord of Montfort-sur-Risle, near Brionne, was the companion of the Conqueror at Hastings. His father, with whom he has been often confounded, fell in mortal combat with Walkelin de Ferrers, who received his death-wound at the same time, during the days of anarchy which followed the succession of the boy William to the Duchy of Normandy.

We hear first of his son Hugh II. as one of the commanders of the Norman forces at the famous battle of Mortemer already spoken of, but of which more will be told in the memoir of its lord, and next in the list of those who furnished contingents to the fleet and army of the great expedition, wherein we find him set down as a contributor of fifty ships and sixty knights.*

In the battle he and the Seigneur de Vieuxpont gallantly rescued William Malet, who had his horse killed under him, and would have been slain himself but for their timely aid. They lost many of their people, but succeeded in protecting Malet, and mounting him on a fresh horse. (*Rom. de Rou.*)

Hugh de Montfort is supposed to be one of the four named by Bishop Guy as the mutilators of the body

* "Ab Hugone de Montfort L naves et LX milites."

of Harold at the close of the conflict; I need only here repeat my utter disbelief in an improbable statement supported by no other contemporary writer.

For his services he received (before the completion of Domesday) sixteen manors in Essex, fifty-one in Suffolk, nineteen in Norfolk, and twenty-eight in Kent, in addition to a large proportion of Romney Marsh, and was one of the barons intrusted by the Conqueror with the administration of justice throughout England, under Bishop Odo and William Fitz Osbern in 1067; and by the Bishop himself, Hugh de Montfort was made Governor of the Castle of Dover, the chief fortress in Odo's own earldom, and the key of the kingdom. His absence on other duties with the Bishop south of the Thames was taken advantage of by the Kentish malcontents, and led to the assault of the castle by the Count of Boulogne, the failure of which has been already related.

The monk of Jumiéges informs us that he was twice married, but names neither of his wives; one, however, appears by his account (Lib. vii. ch. 38) to have been a daughter of Richard de Bellofago (Beaufoe), by a daughter of the Count of Ivri, and was therefore niece of John, Archbishop of Rouen, of Hugh, Bishop of Bayeux, and of the wife of Osbern de Crépon. By the first we are told he had two sons, Hugh and Robert, and

by the second, a daughter named Alice, eventually heir to her brothers, both of whom died without issue, and who became the wife of Gilbert de Gant, son of Baldwin VI. Count of Flanders, and consequently nephew of Queen Matilda.

The date of the death of Hugh II., who became a monk in the Abbey of Bec, is not known, but if the holder in Domesday, he must of course have been living in 1085, his father having been slain some forty-eight or forty-nine years previously. He might probably, therefore, be a young man at the battle of Mortemer in 1054, between forty and fifty at the time of the Conquest, and under seventy if he survived the accession of Rufus. His second son Robert was Commander-in-Chief of the Norman army in Maine in 1099, and on his joining the Crusaders under Bohemund, in 1107, received a hearty welcome and a high rank in the army in consequence, as Orderic speaks of his being "hereditary Marshal of Normandy."*

If this be not a mistake, his elder brother must have been dead at the former date. At all events his father, Hugh II., is styled "the Constable" by Orderic in his enumeration of the personages present in the battle of Senlac.

* "Strator Normanici exercitus hereditario jure."

A few words in conclusion respecting the accusation of Guy, Bishop of Amiens. That prelate was almoner to the Duchess Matilda, and accompanied her to this kingdom in 1068. He therefore had special opportunities of picking up the reports of the day; but he was not like his brother Bishops of Bayeux and Coutances, actually present at Senlac, and his poem being composed before his journey to England, must therefore have been written from hearsay only. The continuator of William of Jumiéges, who mentions his poem, and calls him "a respectable author," does not back his opinion by adopting the Bishop's account of the death of Harold. Neither does Orderic Vital, who was, nevertheless, acquainted with the poem, and says it was an epic in imitation of Virgil and Papinius, describing the battle of Senlac, blaming and accusing Harold, and highly praising and exalting William. A MS. of the 12th century, discovered by Dr. Pertz in the Royal Library at Brussels, is supposed, from its general character, to be the poem in question, the initials L. W. in the second line being interpreted to signify "Wido to Lanfranc." Mr. Petrie, who has published this poem in his "Monumenta Historica Britannica," observes that it is not improbable that Guy was the writer, but Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, in his Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain

(vol. i. p. 671), appears less impressed with its authenticity. Without, however, raising that question, I have shown the probability that Count Eustace de Boulogne was put *hors de combat* before the fall of Harold, that there is no evidence whatever of a noble heir of Ponthieu being present in the battle, even if he were in existence at that period, and that no other historian corroborates the poet's assertion.

The story appears to me to be a sensational version of the account given by Benoît de St.-More, who says that Harold fell pierced by three lances, and his skull cloven to his ears by a dozen swords—itself an evident exaggeration of the plain fact as related by Henry of Huntingdon, which is, that twenty of the bravest knights pledged their troth to each other that they would cut through the English troops and capture the royal ensign. In this attack the greater part were slain, but the remainder, hewing away with their swords, reached and seized the standard. Meanwhile a shower of arrows fell round King Harold, and he himself was pierced in the eye. A crowd of horsemen now burst in, and the King, already wounded, was slain. Cut down in the furious charge with the gallant few who stood their ground beside him, perhaps even undistinguished by his slayers themselves, who in the hasty and general slaughter could not possibly

have found time or opportunity to indulge in such wanton barbarity. The English heavy-armed House-carls fought to the death long after the fall of their King. To have cut off the head of Harold, to have scattered his entrails, the perpetrators must have dismounted, and assuredly had never mounted again.

Could any combatant in the Norman host have been identified as having inflicted a mortal wound on the heroic King of the English, his name would have been as notorious as that of the Conqueror himself. Honest Master Wace acknowledges that he never heard who slew him, only that he was found dead amongst the dead. Walter Giffard and Hugh de Montfort, or some other Hugh, may have been amongst the twenty who bound themselves to capture the standard; and even that honour has not been appropriated to any individual, but their complicity in the disgraceful acts attributed to them is to me incredible. The "lie circumstantial" is always accompanied by the names, and the Bishop of Amiens, if he really did write the song of the battle of Hastings, has not proved an exception to the rule of scandal mongers in general.

CHAPTER VI.

WILLIAM FITZ OSBERN, EARL OF HEREFORD.
ROGER DE MONTGOMERI, EARL OF ARUNDEL AND SHREWSBURY.
ROBERT DE BEAUMONT, COUNT OF MEULENT AND EARL OF LEICESTER.

WILLIAM FITZ OSBERN.

Of the three great names at the head of this chapter, that of William Fitz Osbern claims precedence as the nearest personal friend of the Conqueror, and the chief officer of his household. Son of that Osbern the son of Herfast, otherwise Osbern de Crépon, who was foully murdered in the bed-chamber of his young sovereign by William de Montgomeri, he succeeded him in his office of Dapifer and the favour of the Duke. No particular feat of arms is recorded of him, though he must have fought in some, if not all, of the battles in Normandy during the twenty years or more which immediately preceded the invasion of England, from that of Val-ès-Dunes in 1047 to that of Varaville in 1060, and was probably with the Duke in his expeditions against Conan in Brittany and his invasion of Maine in 1063. We have proof at

least of his presence at the siege of Domfront in 1054, when he was sent with Roger de Montgomeri to demand an explanation from Geoffrey Martel of his conduct in marching into Normandy and seizing Alençon. It is not, however, till the memorable year 1066 that he becomes a prominent person in the history of Normandy and of England. He appears to have somewhat resembled his master in character, combining great valour with much readiness of wit and astuteness of policy. We have seen him entering the hall of the Palace at Rouen "humming a tune," and rousing the moody Duke from his silent and sullen consideration of the news from England by bidding him bestir himself and take vengeance on Harold, who had been so disloyal to him; to call together all that he could call, cross the sea, and wrest the crown from the perjured usurper. William followed his advice, as most people do when they have already determined on taking the course suggested, and "Osbern, of the bold heart," was very likely aware of that fact when he ventured to express his opinion. The call was made first of the Duke's relatives and most confidential friends, and then of the whole baronage of Normandy. It is at this last and large assembly at Lillebonne that the audacity and cunning of Fitz Osbern become strongly apparent.

Considerable hesitation, and in some instances direct objection, being displayed to the adoption of the project, and the council breaking up into groups to discuss it, the wily Dapifer flitted about from one influential chief to the other, suggesting the danger of driving their feudal lord to extremities; that they should rather anticipate his wishes than suffer him to ask their aid in vain, and that it would be much worse for them eventually, should the Duke have to complain that his enterprise had failed in consequence of their defection. Puzzled and irresolute they at length requested him to speak to the Duke in the name of the whole body, and say not only that they feared the sea, but also that they were not bound to serve him beyond it.

Having thus contrived to be elected their spokesman, he, with the greatest effrontery, assured the Duke that they were unanimous in their determination to support him. That to advance him they would go through fire and water. They would not only cross the sea, but double their service. He who should bring twenty knights would cheerfully bring forty; he who was bound to serve with thirty would come with sixty, and the baron who had to serve with one hundred men would join him with two hundred. As to himself, he promised to furnish sixty ships laden

with fighting men. The barons were as indignant as astounded at this unwarrantable declaration. Many openly disavowed him; all was tumult and confusion. "No one could hear another speak; no one could either listen to reason or render it for himself" (*Roman de Rou*).

The Duke then withdrawing to one side of the hall, sent for the barons one by one, and assuring them of his love and grace, pledged himself that if they would support him, as Fitz Osbern had stated, by doubling their service on this occasion, that they should not be called on in future for service beyond what was the custom of the land, and such as their ancestors had always rendered to their feudal lord. The Duke's eloquence was successful, and, as before stated (page 51), each baron's promise was recorded by scribes ready at hand as soon as it was made.

In Taylor's List, the number of ships furnished by Fitz Osbern, whose name stands first upon it, agrees with that mentioned by Wace. "Habuit a Willielmo Dapifero, filio Osberni LX. naves." No knights are mentioned.

We next hear of him on English ground. While the Duke of Normandy was haranguing his forces on the morning of the battle, "William Fitz-Osber" rode up and interrupted him, saying, "Sire, we tarry here

too long, let us all arm ourselves. Allons! Allons!" Wace, who recounts this incident, says, Fitz Osbern's horse was "all covered with iron." This is one of the instances in which he has been guilty of an anachronism, no such practice existing in the days of the Conqueror (*vide* the Bayeux Tapestry), but at the time that he composed the Roman de Rou, the fashion had been imported from the East by the Crusaders, and the horses were often coated with chain from the tail to the nostrils. In the disposition of the army, he was selected by the Duke to be a leader of the wing composed of the men of Boulogne and Poix, but we hear of no special incident connected with his name in the course of the battle.

The reward of his great and long-continued service was promptly bestowed upon him. The earldom of Hereford and the lordship of the Isle of Wight being the principal honours; the manor of Hanley, in Worcestershire, and several in Gloucestershire and other counties, which, in consequence of his dying before the great survey, cannot now be identified.

In addition to these substantial benefits, King William, on his return to Normandy in 1067, made him governor of his newly built Castle of Winchester: an office of great responsibility, as Winchester at that period was a city second only in importance to London.

Its palace was the favourite residence of Edward the Confessor and the early Norman kings. It possessed a mint and a treasury, in which the riches and regalia of the sovereign were deposited, and was consequently to be most jealously guarded. The Conqueror also associated him with Bishop Odo, in the vicegerency of the realm during his absence. Fitz Osbern having the chief administration of justice in the north, and Odo in the south of the kingdom.

On the defeat of Edgar Athelin and his confederates at York by the Conqueror in 1068, William Fitz Osbern was appointed governor of that city, and in the following year was hastily summoned to relieve the cities of Shrewsbury and Exeter, simultaneously attacked by the Welsh and the disaffected men of Cheshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall. He was too late to save Shrewsbury, which the insurgents, under Edric the Wild, had burned and abandoned; but reaching Exeter at the moment when a sudden sally of the garrison had driven back the besiegers and thrown them into confusion, the Earl, in conjunction with Count Brian of Brittany, fell upon them and put them nearly all to the sword.

In 1070, he was sent to Normandy by King William in order to assist Queen Matilda, the duchy being at that time in a very disturbed state. About the same

period war broke out in Flanders between Richilde, widow of Count Baldwin VI.—called De Mons, and mother of his eldest son and heir, Ernulph—and Robert, surnamed the Frison, who claimed the regency during the minority of Ernulph, in conformity with the will of his deceased brother. Matilda, taking the side of her sister-in-law, sent the Earl of Hereford with what forces she could spare to her aid. The Earl was then a widower, and either from love or ambition, became a suitor for the hand of the still fair Countess of Flanders.

Richilde, either responding to his affection, or from a desire to attach the valiant Norman more thoroughly to her interest, married him, and made him titular Count of Flanders.

He did not long, however, enjoy his dignity, for, on the 22nd of February, 1071, a sanguinary engagement took place at Ravenchoven, near Cassel, between the forces of Robert the Frison and those of the Countess Richilde and her ally, Philip I., King of France, in which both her son, young Count Ernulph, and her husband, the Earl of Hereford, who fought by his side, fell together.

According to Meier, the death-blow of William Fitz Osbern was dealt by one of his own knights, named Gerbodon, who had previously unhorsed him,

but we are left in doubt as to the motive of the felon. The Earl's body was carried by his men-at-arms to the Abbey of Cormeilles, in Normandy, of which he was the founder in 1060, and buried there "amid much sorrow." His first wife, Adelina or Adeliza, was the daughter of Roger de Toeni. The date of her death is uncertain, but it probably took place some few years before the Conquest. She was buried at the Abbey of Lire, on the river Risle, in Normandy, which was also founded by Fitz Osbern as early as 1046; perchance on the occasion of his marriage, as Cormeilles may have been on that of her death. The dates are at least suggestive.

By Adelina de Toeni he had three sons and two daughters. The eldest son, William, succeeded him as Lord of Breteuil and Pacy, and in all his other possessions in Normandy. The second, Ralph, was shorn a monk, when young, in the Abbey of Cormeilles; and the third, Roger de Breteuil, had the earldom of Hereford and all the land his father held in England. The eldest daughter, Emma, married Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, of whom much hereafter. The name of the second and that of her husband are at present unknown, but she became the mother of Raynold de Cracci.* A

* It is clear, therefore, that Dugdale and the other genealogists are in error, who give to Roger de Toeni for wife Alicia, a daughter of

natural daughter of William de Breteuil, named Isabel, married Ascelin Goel, and was the direct ancestress of the Lovels of Tichmarsh. (*Vide* vol. ii., ch. vii.)

ROGER DE MONTGOMERI.

"William sat on his war-horse and called out Rogier, whom they name De Montgomeri. 'I rely greatly on you. Lead your men thitherward and attack them from that side. William, the son of Osbern, the seneschal, a right good vassal, shall go with you and help in the attack, and you shall have the men of Boulogne and Poix and all my soldiers'" (*i.e.* paid troops—mercenaries). Such are the words Wace puts in the mouth of the Conqueror. And yet, according to Orderic, Roger de Montgomeri was not present at Hastings, having been left by the Duke in Normandy, governor of the duchy.

His statement is most explicit. King William, during his visit to his Norman dominions in 1067, was greatly disquieted by the reports from England of the disaffection of his new subjects, and the advantage taken of it by the Danes. "Leaving the government

William Fitz Osbern, independently of the fact that in that case she would have been his own grand-daughter. Adela, by Père Anselm called Hélène, the widow of Roger de Toeni, and mother of Adeline or Alicia, wife of Will. Fitz Osbern, married secondly Richard Count of Evreux, *vide* chapter viii., p. 249.

of Normandy," he proceeds, "to his Queen Matilda, and his young son Robert, with a council of religious priests and valiant nobles, to be guardians of the state, he rode, on the night of the 6th of December, to the mouth of the river Dieppe, below the town of Arques, and setting-sail with a south wind in the first watch of the cold night, reached in the morning, after a most prosperous voyage, the harbour on the opposite coast called Winchester. . . . . In his present voyage he was attended by Roger de Montgomeri, who at the time of his former expedition to invade England was left with his wife, governor of Normandy."

Now when we remember that the father of Orderic was Odelirius of Orleans, one of the followers of this very Roger de Montgomeri when he came into England, and for his services received a grant of land lying on the banks of the river Meole at the east gate of Shrewsbury; that, with the help of his lord, he founded the monastery there of St. Peter and St. Paul, to which he retired in 1110, the Earl himself having died therein fourteen years previously; that Orderic, born in 1075, was at school at Shrewsbury until he was ten years of age, when he was sent to Normandy, became a monk in the Abbey of St. Evreux, of which Roger de Montgomeri was a patron and benefactor, revisited England in 1115, and was living, at the age of sixty-

six, in 1141,—it surely follows, that of all the companions of the Conqueror he had ever seen or heard of, Roger de Montgomeri, Earl of Shrewsbury, his father's lord and friend, was the one respecting whom he must have possessed the most accurate information. Is it likely, supposing Roger de Montgomeri had commanded a wing of the invading army, and performed feats of bravery at Senlac, that his servant and protégé who came over with him, and must in that case have been present at Hastings himself, would have been silent on the subject? Would not his deeds have been the theme of his whole household, and of the very school-fellows of the young Orderic? Was the Lord of Belesme amongst the noble personages who accompanied King William on his visit to Normandy in 1067? and if not, what was he doing in England during the disturbances in the King's absence? How was it that a man of his position and prowess was not associated with the other great warriors appointed to guard the realm and administer justice throughout it? His name never occurs even incidentally during that period.

Against this, to me overwhelming evidence, we have to place the statement of William of Poitiers, who, without any allusion to Roger de Montgomeri, simply says that Roger de Beaumont was the person

at the head of the council appointed by the Duke to assist Matilda in the government of Normandy, and that of Wace, who circumstantially describes the actions of Roger de Montgomeri in the great battle. As the latter authority distinctly contradicts William of Poitiers, by making "old Rogier de Belmont" present at Senlac, in lieu of remaining in Normandy to counsel Matilda, he is as likely to be wrong in one assertion as the other. William of Poitiers is more to be trusted, but he does not say that Roger de Montgomeri was in the battle; he makes no mention of him whatever, though he gives the names of a dozen of the principal personages present; nor does he prove that he was not amongst the noble and wise men selected by the Duke to compose that council, of which the writer states Roger de Beaumont was the president. Mr. Freeman, confiding in the archdeacon, sets down the assertion of Orderic as "a plain though very strange confusion between Roger of Montgomeri and Roger of Beaumont." I only suggest that the son of Odelirius is the least likely person to have made that confusion, and that we have no proof of Roger de Montgomeri's presence in England previous to 1068.

The Lord of Belesme, however, is too remarkable a personage in the annals of those times to be omitted, on anything short of conclusive evidence, from an

account of the companions of the Conqueror, and his family history is full of stirring and romantic incidents.

Orderic has minutely chronicled his marriages, his children, his deeds of valour and piety, his death and burial, and yet such is the mist that hangs over the genealogical history of our ancient nobility, that the father of this great and powerful Earl has only been recently identified. Brooke, in his Catalogue, declared him to be the son of Hugh de Montgomeri and of Sibell, his wife, fifth daughter of Herfastus the Dane, brother of Gunnora, Duchess of Normandy. Vincent triumphantly quotes the monk of Jumiéges in contradiction of this assertion, and insists that he was the son of Hugh de Montgomeri by Jocellina, his wife, daughter of Turolf de Pontaudemer, by Weeva, sister of the said Duchess Gunnora, and so he continued to be considered, notwithstanding that many passages in Orderic show this to be a mistake, until the French editors of that historian and the late Mr. Stapleton, in his illustration of the Norman Rolls of the Exchequer, clearly proved that the first Earl of Arundel and Shrewsbury was not the son of a Hugh de Montgomeri by either lady, but of another Roger de Montgomeri, living in the time of Richard III. and his brother Robert, Dukes of Normandy, and who in

an early deed describes himself: "Ego Rogerius, quam dicunt Montgomeri." His son Roger, the subject of this memoir, in the act of foundation for the Abbey of Troarn in the Hiemois, acknowledging and distinguishing his father in the following words: "Ego Rogerius, ex Normannis, Normannus magni autem Rogerii filius."

"The old chronicler, Robert du Mont, had heard," observes Mr. Stapleton, "of the reputed descent from a niece of the Duchess Gunnora, wife of Richard I., Duke of Normandy, but the genealogy given is certainly erroneous in making her, as wife to Hugh de Montgomeri, the immediate progenitrix of Roger, the Viscount of the Oximin or Hiemois."

To any one unaccustomed to the examination of such subjects, it would appear strange that modern historians and genealogists could have overlooked the obvious inference to be drawn from the very circumstantial account given of the assassination of Osbern the seneschal by Guillaume de Jumiéges himself, who, in the second chapter of his seventh book, informs us that Osbern, the son of Herfast, brother of the Duchess Gunnora, had his throat cut by William, son of Roger de Montgomeri, one night while sleeping in the Duke's chamber at Vaudreuil; that Roger, for his perfidy, was exiled to Paris; and that five of his sons,

Hugh, Robert, *Roger*, William, and Gilbert, continued their wicked careers in Normandy.

Surely no statement can be much clearer than this that there was a Roger de Montgomeri living during the minority of William II., Duke of Normandy, who had five sons, the third being named after him, and who, it is evident from subsequent passages in the same and other histories, was the Roger de Montgomeri who ultimately became Earl of Shrewsbury. Of these five sons we can trace the destinies. Hugh, Robert, and William were slain,—the latter by Barno de Glotis, a servant of the Seneschal Osbern, in revenge for the murder of his master. Roger was Viscount of the Hiemois; and Gilbert, his youngest brother, was unintentionally poisoned by his sister-in-law, as I shall hereafter have occasion to mention.

Of the five sons of the first Roger de Montgomeri, Hugh was apparently the eldest, as at the foot of one of his charters in the time of Duke Robert is "Signum Hugonis filii ejus," and it is therefore highly probable that the father of the first Roger might have been named Hugh, and was the husband of one of the nieces of Gunnora, and the confusion have arisen from that circumstance.

The story told by the monk of Jumiéges, though

clear enough as regards the family of Montgomeri, is obscure in other respects. William de Montgomeri is named as the murderer of Osbern, who, if there be any truth in the statement of Brooke, must have been his near kinsman, and Roger, the father of the criminal, is banished, apparently for the crime; which would imply that he was "particeps criminis"—the instigator or accomplice of his son.

However this may be, it appears to have been the result of a personal quarrel, if not a family feud, for Orderic records that Osbern, the steward of Normandy, and William and Hugh, two sons of Roger de Montgomeri, and many other powerful knights, made war on each other in turn, causing great distress and confusion in the country, which was deprived at that time of its natural protectors, simply mentioning that Osbern was one of the many nobles who fell in those mutual quarrels.

The genealogy of the Dukes of Normandy from Rollo is in all the collateral portions exceedingly confused, and the chronology of the duchy itself beset with difficulties.

Next to Charlemagne, the Duchess Gonnor, or Gunnora, appears to have been the favourite starting-point for our Norman genealogists. If there is any insuperable obstacle in the way of hooking their line on to

the Emperor of the West, they eagerly hitch it up, no matter how, to some loose end of the family of that fortunate fair one for whose romantic history we are indebted to the pages of Guillaume de Jumiéges. As it is short as well as romantic, and so very old that it may be new to many of my readers, I will venture to tell it in the fewest words possible.

One of the foresters of Richard I., Duke of Normandy, was blest with a most beautiful wife, of Danish blood it would appear, named Sanfrie, the report of whose charms inspired the Duke with a vehement desire to ascertain the truth of it by personal observation. He therefore ordered a hunting party in the direction of the forester's dwelling, at which he stopped during the day, as a matter of course for rest and refreshment. The beautiful Sanfrie received her sovereign as was her duty, and the Duke was so captivated that he commanded her husband to resign her to him. As resistance could avail nothing, the woman, who had as much wit as beauty, contrived to substitute her sister for herself, and the Duke, luckily for all parties, was not only well pleased with the exchange, but piously rejoiced that he had escaped a more flagrant breach of the decalogue. The fair substitute was named Gonnor or Gunnora, and on the death of Richard's first wife became Duchess of

Normandy, and mother of Duke Richard II., called after her Gonnorides.

Such is the story, and at least there is no doubt about the marriage, which naturally led to the elevation of the other members of the Duchess's family. Besides Sanfrie (the wife of the forester), Gunnora had two sisters, the one named Eva or Weeva, and the other Avelina or Duvelima, and a brother named Herfast; and to one or other of these lucky Danes the majority of our Norman pedigrees are, as I have stated, hung on by hook or by crook.

The date of the death of the elder Roger de Montgomeri is not yet known, but he was evidently dead in 1056, when Roger II. invited Gislebert, Abbot of Châtillon, with his monks, to Froarn, and expelled thence the twelve canons who had been placed there by his father in 1022, and had abandoned themselves to gluttony, debauchery, carnal pleasures, and worldly occupations.

We have already heard of William Talvas, the Lord of Belesme, who cursed the Conqueror in his cradle (*vide* p. 9, *ante*). Roger de Montgomeri married, in 1048, Mabel, the daughter of that William, and niece of Ivo de Belesme, Bishop of Séez from 1035 to 1070. By this match he acquired a large portion of the domains of his father-in-law, and by the advice of

Bishop Ivo, his wife's uncle, transferred the Church of St. Martin of Séez to Theodoric, Abbot of St. Evroult, and, in conjunction with his wife, earnestly entreated the Bishop to erect a monastery there, which it appears he did. Now this Mabel, the chronicler tells us, was both powerful and politic, shrewd and fluent, but extremely cruel. Still she had a high regard for the excellent Theodoric, and in some things submitted to his admonitions, although in general averse to religious men.

"This lady," he subsequently tells us, "maliciously caused many troubles to the monks of St. Evroult, on account of the hatred she bore to the family of Giroie, founders of that abbey; but as her husband, Roger de Montgomeri, loved and honoured the monks, she did not venture to exhibit any open signs of her vindictive feeling. She therefore made the abbey her frequent resort, attended by numerous bands of armed retainers, under pretence of claiming the hospitality of the brotherhood, but to their great oppression, in consequence of their poverty through the barrenness of their land. At one time, when she had taken up her abode at the abbey with a hundred men-at-arms, and was remonstrated with by Abbot Theodoric on the sinful absurdity of coming with such a splendid retinue to the dwelling of poor anchorites, she exclaimed, in

great wrath, 'When I come again my followers shall be still more numerous!' The abbot replied, 'Trust me, unless you repent of this iniquity, you will suffer what will be very painful to you.' And so it happened, for the very night following she was attacked by a disorder which caused her great suffering. Upon this she gave instant orders for being carried forth from the abbey, and flying in a state of alarm from the territory of St. Evroult, passed by the dwelling of a certain farmer named Roger Suissar, whose newly-born child she stopped for a few moments to suckle, with a hope of obtaining relief. It caused her severe pain at the time, but she reached home, we are told, completely restored to health, the unfortunate infant dying shortly afterwards."

Of course the honest monk who believes "each strange tale devoutly true" has no suspicion that the abbot took care that his prophecy should be fulfilled, and gave the very inconvenient visitor a dose which would not kill her, but cure her of coming to the abbey. The death of the baby, if it did die, was a coincidence too tempting not to be made the most of.

In 1063 Arnould d'Eschafour, son of William Giroie, the founder of the Abbey of St. Evroult, against whose family a deadly hatred had been continually cherished by that of Belesme, and who by the

machinations of Mabel had been banished Normandy, presented himself at the Court of the Duke, and offering him a magnificent mantle, humbly entreated that his inheritance might be restored to him. The Duke, at that moment being in want of brave soldiers for his wars with the Manceaux and the Bretons, with his usual policy accepted the gift, and promised to restore him his estates (the greater proportion of which Mabel had contrived to obtain for her husband), giving him meanwhile free passage through his territories for a limited time.

Returning from the Court in company with Gilbert de Montgomeri, brother of Roger, he stopped at his Castle of Eschafour, then in the possession of Roger and Mabel, whose attendants pressed him earnestly to partake of some refreshments their lady had ordered them to set before him. He had, however, received from a friend a hint of some treachery, and remembering the warning, steadily refused to touch either the meat or the wine. Gilbert, who had ridden there with him, quite unconscious of the foul design, took a cup without dismounting from his horse, and draining its poisoned contents, died three days afterwards at Remalord. Thus, observes Orderic, this perfidious woman, attempting to destroy her husband's rival, caused the death of his only surviving brother, who

was in the flower of his youth, and much distinguished for his chivalrous gallantry. Foiled in this attempt, she shortly afterwards made another, as deadly and unfortunately more successful. By means of entreaties and promises she induced Roger Gulafre, the chamberlain of Arnould, to become the instrument of her murderous designs.

Arnould being at Courville, near Châtres, with his relatives, Giroie de Courville and William, surnamed Gouet de Montmirail, the traitor Gulafre took an opportunity of serving to his master and the other two nobles the poisoned beverage he had received from Mabel: Giroie and William de Montmirail survived the effects of the poison, but Arnould, after languishing for some days, expired on the 1st of January, 1064. After his decease the great family of Giroie gradually fell to decay, and for twenty-six years their lands remained in the possession of that of Montgomeri.

A truly terrible fate, however, awaited this infamous woman, who, according to the chronicler, had caused many great lords to be disinherited and to beg their bread in foreign lands. Amongst her victims was Hugh de la Roche d'Igé, in the Canton de Belesme, from whom she had wrested his castle on the rock, and had deprived of the inheritance of the lands of his fathers. In the extremity of his distress he undertook

a desperate enterprise. With the assistance of his three brothers, men of undaunted courage, he forced an entry by night into the chamber of the Countess (for such was her rank at that time) at a place called Bures, on the Dive, near Froarn, and severed her head from her body as she lay in bed after having taken a bath. Their vengeance satiated, they lost no time in making good their retreat. Hugh de Montgomeri, her second son, who was in the castle with sixteen men-at-arms, on hearing of his mother's murder, instantly took horse and pursued the assassins, but was unable to overtake them, as they had taken the precaution to break down behind them the bridges over the rivers, which, being flooded and the night dark, presented such obstacles in the way of the pursuers that the four brothers succeeded in crossing the frontiers of Normandy, and took unmolested the road to Apulia.

Mabel was buried at Froarn on the 5th of December, 1082, Durandus being at that time the abbot who disgraced himself by causing a fulsome epitaph, preserved by Orderic, to be inscribed on the tomb of a detestable murderess.

I have travelled a little out of the record, as the lawyers say, in order to complete the story of this special representative of the hereditary wickedness of

the family of Belesme, and must now return to her husband, whom the chronicler appears to acquit of direct complicity in the darker deeds of his wife, and simply observes, that as long as Mabel lived he was, at her instigation, a very troublesome neighbour to the inmates of Ouche, she having been always opposed to the family of Giroie. In 1066 we find him at the Council of Lillebonne, and, according to Taylor's List, contributing a noble contingent to the fleet of his sovereign, "A Rogero de Mongomeri sexaginta naves," the furnishing of which by no means proves that he accompanied them to England.

Wace is the only writer worth consideration who speaks of him as present in the great conflict, and selected by the Duke to command a wing of the invading army, while Dugdale, quoting the annals of St. Augustin at Canterbury, says he "led the middle part," which Wace as distinctly asserts was led by William himself, composed of all his principal nobles, his personal friends and kinsmen. Neither Robert du Mont, nor William of Jumiéges, nor Benoît de St.-More, nor William of Poitiers, nor the author of Carmen de Bello make any mention of Roger de Montgomeri at that period, while Wace, not content with giving him the command of an important division, tells us of his single combat with a gigantic English-

man, captain of a hundred men, who, with his long Saxon axe, had hewed down horse and man till the Normans stood aghast at him. Roger de Montgomeri, riding at full speed with his lance couched, and shouting "strike, Frenchmen!" ("Ferrez, Franceiz") bore the giant to the earth, and revived the courage of his soldiers. Orderic, however, seems never to have heard of this brilliant exploit, nor anyone else that I am aware of.

In 1068, however, he appears to have been in England, and two years afterwards received from the Conqueror the earldoms of Arundel and Shrewsbury, with the honour of Eye in Suffolk, and various estates in the counties of Cambridge, Warwick, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Staffordshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, and Middlesex, amounting in all to one hundred and fifty-seven manors, besides the cities of Chichester and Shrewsbury, and the Castle of Arundel.

At the same date (1070), by the death of Ivo, Bishop of Seez, he became, in right of his wife Mabel, Seigneur of Belesme and Count of Alençon, which, added to his patrimonial lordship of Montgomeri, rendered him comparatively as powerful in Normandy as in England.

In 1077, the Earl of Shrewsbury accompanied King William in his expedition to recover the province of Maine, which had revolted, and, after its submission,

marched with a division of the army to the relief of the Castle of La Flèche, in which its lord, John de la Flèche was besieged by Fulk le Rechin, Count of Anjou. A battle being prevented by the interposition of some Cardinal not named, terms of peace were agreed upon, Roger Earl of Shrewsbury and William Count of Evreux taking a prominent part in the negotiations. This treaty is known as the Peace of Blanchelande or of Bruere, from the locality in which it was concluded.

After the death of his wicked wife Mabel by the vengeful sword of Hugh de la Roche d'Igé, in December, 1082, Roger de Montgomeri married Adelaide, daughter of Everard de Puiset, an amiable and virtuous lady, who wrought by her advice and her example a great change for the better in his character, which, naturally good, had been warped by the arts and influence of his former Countess.

His building of the church at Quatford, near Bridgenorth, in Shropshire, was due to one of those so-called "pious frauds," of which we read so many accounts in our mediæval chronicles, and which in this instance was practised on the Countess Adelaide.

On the first passage of this excellent lady from Normandy to England there arose so great a storm at sea, that nothing but shipwreck was expected by the mariners. The chaplain of the Countess, being much

wearied with long watching, fell asleep, and saw in his dreams a comely matron, who said to him, "If your lady would be preserved from the danger of this dreadful tempest, let her vow to God that she will build a church to the honour of St. Mary Magdalen in the place where she shall first meet the Earl, her husband, in England" (he having preceded her thither some short time), "and specially where an hollow oak groweth near a hog-stye." All which, when the priest awoke, he related to the Countess, who forthwith made her vow accordingly, whereupon the tempest ceased, and she and her attendants landed safely in England. Journeying to rejoin her husband, she, after divers days, encountered him near Quatford, in a wood, hunting, at a certain spot where such an oak as "the comely matron" had described then grew—and near a hog-stye, I presume, though it is not mentioned. She lost no time in informing her lord of the chaplain's vision and her consequent vow, and prayed him to fulfil it. The Earl, in gratitude for the preservation of his wife, readily assented. The church in honour of St. Mary Magdalen was built, endowed with ample possessions, and given to the Earl's collegiate chapel in the castle at Bridgenorth—much to the advantage, no doubt, of the reverend chaplain, who may have been one of the clergymen, Godebald or Herbert, by

whose counsels, Orderic tells us, in addition to those of Odelirius, the Earl was always prosperously guided.

The Earl, in common with many of the Norman nobility, appears to have been much attached to Robert Court-heuse, who, with all his faults, was brave, generous, and kindly-hearted. Witness his conduct when besieging his brother Henry in Mont St. Michel, in 1091. The garrison, being in great distress from want of water, Robert forbade his soldiers to prevent detachments issuing from the place to draw water from the wells, and, on being blamed by William Rufus for his consideration, exclaimed, "What, shall we suffer our brother to perish of thirst? who can now give us another should we lose him?" Where shall we find such an incident recorded of the heartless tyrant, his father, who ridiculed and hated him?

As early as 1081, we find the name of Roger, Earl of Shrewsbury, amongst those who zealously interceded with King William at Rouen in favour of Robert after the battle of Gerberoi, and, after long pleading, succeeded in effecting a reconciliation between them, which, reluctantly consented to by the former, was of very brief duration; and on the accession of William Rufus he proved still further his affection for Robert, and his opinion of the injustice with which he had

been treated by the Conqueror, by joining with the Earls of Kent, Cornwall, and other powerful noblemen in the attempt to place Robert on the throne of England, as the eldest son and rightful heir to the crown; and though not openly taking up arms, secretly favouring the movement, his three eldest sons, Robert, Hugh, and Roger, being amongst the young nobility who held Odo's castle at Rochester against the King. The Earl of Shrewsbury is said to have been gained over by the artful promises of Rufus to submit his right to the crown to be decided by him and others whom the late King had assigned to be his curators; and after the reduction of Rochester, and the suppression of the rebellion, we find Earl Roger fortifying his Castles of Belesme and Alençon in the cause of the King, and his son Robert a prisoner of that very Duke of Normandy, to place whom on the throne they had so recently risked their lives and properties.

The accounts of these tergiversations are so confused and discordant that, beyond main facts, it is dangerous to state anything, and as to the motives we are completely in the dark; but the days of Roger de Montgomeri were now briefly to be numbered. He returned to England in 1094, and having obtained from the Abbey of Cluni, of which he was a benefactor, the habit of its celebrated abbot, St. Hugh,

assumed it, and was shorn a monk in the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul at Shrewsbury, with the consent, we are assured, of his wife, the Countess Adeliza, and for three days before his death wholly applied himself to divine conference and devout prayers with the rest of the community, expiring, in the odour of sanctity, 6th kalends of August, in the above year, leaving by his first wife, Mabel, five sons and four daughters: Robert, the eldest son, who succeeded to his mother's large estates in Normandy as Count of Alençon and Seigneur de Belesme; Hugh, who inherited his father's domains in England, with the earldoms of Arundel and Shrewsbury; Roger, surnamed of Poitou, in consequence of his marriage with Almodis Countess of March, who possessed great estates in that province, and also sometimes called Earl of Lancaster for a similar reason; Philip, who accompanied Duke Robert to the Crusades, and died at Antioch; and Arnoul, who married Lafracota, daughter of a king of Ireland, and by conquest obtained that part of South Wales now called Pembrokeshire, and, building a castle there, appears to have been sometime entitled Earl of Pembroke, as his brother was of Lancaster. The daughters by Mabel were Emma, Abbess of Almenache; Maud, wife of Robert, Count of Mortain and Earl of Cornwall; Mabel, wife of Hugh de

Château-neuf; and Sibil, who married Robert Fitz Hamon, Lord of Corboil, in Normandy.

By his second wife he had only a son named Everard, who took holy orders, and was chaplain to King Henry I.

The Earls of Eglintoun are presumed to be descended from this family of Montgomeri, but no proof has ever been made, and though in 1696 there existed a Comte de Montgomeri in France, an Earl of Montgomery in England, a Montgomery Earl of Eglintoun in Scotland, and a Montgomery Earl of Mount Alexander in Ireland, the link has yet to be found which would legitimately connect these noble families with that of the great Earl of Shrewsbury, who has only transmitted his name to us in that county of North Wales which he won by the sword and called Montgomery.

ROBERT DE BEAUMONT.

"Rogier li Veil, cil de Belmont,
Assalt Engleis el primier front."—
Roman de Rou, l. 13462.

THUS sings the Prebend of Bayeux in direct contradiction, as I have already observed, of the Archdeacon of Lisieux, who as distinctly asserts that Roger de

Beaumont was left in Normandy, president of the council appointed by the Duke to assist his Duchess in its government. There is more reason, however, to discredit Wace in this instance than even in the former one, as Orderic corroborates the statement of the Archdeacon that it was Robert, the eldest son of Roger de Beaumont, who was the companion of the Conqueror in 1066, and whom he describes as "a novice in arms." Mr. Taylor, in his translation of the poem, has mentioned also that in the MS. of Wace, in the British Museum, the name is Robert, though the epithet "le Viel" is not appropriate to his then age. Might not "le Viel" be a clerical error for "*de Vielles*," the name of Roger's father, which is latinized into "de Vitulis?" Roger de Beaumont would of course have been de Vielles as well as his father. The latinizing of proper names cannot be too much deplored and deprecated.

Of Roger, Count de Beaumont, it is unanimously recorded that he was the noblest, the wealthiest, and the most valiant seigneur of Normandy, and the greatest and most trusted friend of the Danish family. Son of Humphrey de Vielles, and grandson of Thorold de Pontaudemer, a descendant of the Kings of Denmark, through Bernard the Dane, a companion of the first Norman Conqueror, Duke Rollo, illustrious as

was such an origin in the eyes of his countrymen, he considered his alliance with Adelina, Countess of Meulent, sufficiently honourable and important to induce him to adopt the title of her family in preference to that of his own.

We have already heard of his first great exploit, when, as a young man, in the early years of Duke William, he defeated the turbulent Roger de Toeni, who with his two sons were slain in that sanguinary conflict (*vide* p. 19, *ante*). Towards the invading fleet he contributed, according to Taylor's List, sixty vessels, and being at that time advanced in years, and selected to superintend the affairs of the duchy, sent his young son Robert to win his spurs at Senlac.

In that memorable battle he is said to have given proofs of courage and intelligence beyond his years, and promise of the high reputation he would eventually obtain, and which won for him the surname of Prudhomme. "A certain Norman young soldier," writes William of Poitou, "son of Roger de Bellomont, and nephew and heir of Hugh, Count of Meulent, by Adelina, his sister, making his first onset in that fight, did what deserves lasting fame, boldly charging and breaking in upon the enemy with the troops he commanded in the right wing of the army."

His services were rewarded by ninety manors in Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Wiltshire, and Northamptonshire.

In 1080 he, with his brother Henry, afterwards Earl of Warwick, were amongst the barons who exerted themselves to reconcile King William to his son Robert Court-heuse, and in 1081 he subscribed a charter of confirmation in favour of the Abbey of Fécamp. This was the last document he signed in the name of Beaumont, for his mother dying in that year, he thenceforth wrote himself Comte de Meulent, and did homage to Philip I., King of France, for the lands to which he succeeded in that kingdom, and in 1082 sat as a Peer of France in a parliament held by the said King at Poissy.

On the death of the Conqueror, the Comte de Meulent and his brother sided with William Rufus; their father, Roger de Beaumont, leaving also the ducal court and retiring to his estates. The late King had given the Castle of Ivri jointly to Roger de Beaumont and Robert his son; but during the absence of the latter in England, Robert Court-heuse, having become Duke of Normandy, exchanged, in 1090, that castle for the Castle of Brionne with Roger de Beaumont, without obtaining the consent of Robert de Meulent. The latter, having a quarrel with the monks of Bec,

whose monastery was in the territory of Brionne, was greatly angered by this transaction, and repairing to the Duke at Rouen, boldly demanded of him the restoration of Ivri. The Duke answered that he had given his father the Castle of Brionne for it, which was a fair exchange. The Count replied, "I was no party to that bargain, and repudiate it; but what your father gave to my father that will I have, or by Saint Nicaise I will make you repent your conduct to me." The Duke, highly incensed, had him immediately arrested and imprisoned, and seizing the Castle of Brionne, gave it into the keeping of Robert, son of Baldwin de Meules. Roger de Beaumont, on receipt of these tidings, sought the Duke, and with the skill of an old courtier contrived to pacify his resentment, and obtain the release of his son and the restoration of Brionne; but Robert de Meules, who was in charge of it, refused to surrender it, and the Count de Meulent was obliged to resort to force. Siege was laid to the castle in regular form, and the garrison stoutly holding out, Gilbert du Pin, commanding the beleaguering forces, caused arrows, with their steel heads made red-hot in a furnace, to be shot over the battlements, and which, falling on the roofs of the buildings within the walls, set them on fire. The conflagration spreading, the place became no longer tenable, and

Brionne remained from that period in the hands of the Counts of Meulent.

The monks of Bec now found it necessary to patch up their quarrels with the Count, who behaved generously on the occasion, confirming their privileges and those also of the Abbey of Préaux, of Jumiéges, and St. Vaudrille, remitting certain imports due to him from the wine-growers of Mantes. I mention these circumstances, which have no interest for the general reader, only to notice a singular condition the Count attached to the franchise, namely, that the masters of all boats passing the Castles of Meulent and Mantes should play on the flageolet as they shot the bridges!

On the departure of Robert Court-heuse for the Crusades, William Rufus, to whom he had confided the government of Normandy, as a pledge for the repayment of the money the King had lent to him for the expenses of his expedition, considered it a good opportunity to recover from France the province of the Vexin. The Count of Meulent found himself awkwardly situated between the two contending parties. He owed fealty to both sovereigns: to the King of France for the Comté of Meulent, and to the King of England for his large estates, both in that country and Normandy. He decided in favour of the latter, received into his castle the forces of the Red

King, and so opened for him an entrance into France. The war ended without advantage to either side, and was followed by another between Rufus and Hélie de la Flèche, Comte du Maine. After vainly attempting to reduce the Castle of Dangueul, the King withdrew from the siege, leaving the Count of Meulent to carry on the operations. On the 28th April, 1098, Hélie was drawn into an ambush by Count Robert, and, after a desperate defence, made prisoner, and conducted by him to the King, who was at Rouen, and who consigned his captive immediately to a dungeon in the great tower of that city.

The incidents and results of this campaign are not sufficiently connected with the personal history of Robert de Meulent to require notice here. He was one of the royal hunting party in the New Forest on the 2nd of August, 1100, when William Rufus received his mysterious death-wound, and hastened on the instant with Prince Henry to Winchester, in order to secure the royal treasure, as well as the succession to the throne of England.

Under the reign of the new King he retained the favour and influence he had enjoyed during those of the two Williams, and commanded the English army, which achieved the conquest of Normandy by Henry I. in 1106, who acknowledged himself indebted for it to

the advice and valour of the Earl of Leicester, to which dignity Robert de Meulent had been advanced by him at some period not distinctly ascertained, but most probably in the first year of his reign.

Orderic Vital gives the following account of the mode by which he obtained the earldom:—"The town of Leicester had four masters—the King, the Bishop of Lincoln, Earl Simon" (Simon de St. Liz, Earl of Huntingdon), "and Ivo, the son of Hugh" (de Grentmesnil). The latter had been heavily fined for turbulent conduct, and was in disgrace at Court. He was also galled by being nicknamed "the Rope-dancer," having been one of those who had been let down by ropes from the walls of Antioch. He therefore had resolved to rejoin the Crusade, and made an agreement with the Count of Meulent to the following effect:—The Count was to procure his reconciliation with the King, and to advance him five hundred silver marks for the expenses of his expedition, having the whole of Ivo's domains pledged to him as a security for fifteen years. In consideration of this, the Count was to give the daughter of his brother Henry, Earl of Warwick, in marriage to Ivo's son, who was yet in his infancy, and to restore him his father's inheritance. This contract was confirmed by oath, and ratified by the King, but Ivo died on his road to the Holy Land,

and Robert de Meûlent, by royal favour and his own address, contrived to get the whole of Leicester into his own hands, and being in consequence created an English earl, his wealth and power surpassed those of any other peer of the realm, and he was exalted above nearly all his family."*

This great warrior and able man is said to have died of sorrow and mortification, caused by the infidelity of his second wife Elizabeth, otherwise Isabella, daughter of Hugh the Great, Comte de Vermandois and of Chaumont in the Vexin.

He had married—the date at present unknown—Godechilde de Conches, daughter of Roger de Toeni, Seigneur de Conches, but had separated from her before 1096, as in that year she, who could not then have been seventeen, became the wife of Baldwin, son of Eustace de Boulogne, who was King of Jerusalem after the decease of his brother Godfrey. Robert de Meulent, then being between fifty and sixty, and without issue, sought the hand of Elizabeth de Vermandois, who was in the bloom of youth, and was accepted by the lady; but Ivo, Bishop of Châtres, forbade the marriage on the ground of consanguinity, the Count of Vermandois and the Count of Meulent being both great-grandsons of Gautier II., surnamed

* Book xi. c. 2.

"Le Blanc," Count of the Vexin. A dispensation was obtained, however, from the Pope, on condition that Count Hugh should take the Cross, and the marriage was celebrated on the eve of his departure for the Holy Land, the same year in which Robert's first wife married Baldwin de Boulogne.

The issue of Robert de Meulent by his second wife was a daughter named Emma, born, according to Orderic, in 1102; two sons (twins), baptised Waleran and Robert, born in 1104; a third son, known as Hugh the Poor, afterwards Earl of Bedford, and three other daughters, Adeline, Amicia, and Albreda, all of whom must have been born after 1104, when their father, then Earl of Leicester, was well stricken in years. Orderic, indeed, says he had five daughters, the fifth being named Isabel, after her mother.

All these children being born in wedlock, were of course in the eyes of the law legitimate, but William de Warren, Earl of Warren and Surrey, second of that name, son of the mysterious Gundred, had supplanted the Earl of Leicester for some years in the affections of his wife, and her ultimate desertion of him for his young rival affected his mind, and hurried him to the grave, June 5, 1118.

Henry of Huntingdon, in his "Letter to Walter," gives the following account of his last moments:—

"I will mention the Earl of Meulent, the most sagacious in political affairs of all who lived between this and Jerusalem. His mind was enlightened, his eloquence persuasive, his shrewdness acute; he was provident and wily; his prudence never failed; his counsels were profound; his wisdom great. He had extensive and noble possessions, which are commonly called honours, together with towns and castles, villages and farms, woods and waters, which he acquired by the exercise of the talents I have mentioned. His domains lay not only in England but in Normandy and France, so that he was able at his will to promote concord between the sovereigns of those countries, or to set them at variance and provoke them to war. If he took umbrage against any man, his enemy was humbled and crushed, while those he favoured were exalted to honour. Hence his coffers were filled with a prodigious influx of wealth in gold and silver, besides precious gems and costly furniture and apparel. But when he was in the zenith of his power it happened that a certain earl carried off the lady he had espoused, either by some intrigue or by force and stratagem. Thenceforth his mind was disturbed and clouded with grief, nor did he to the time of his death regain composure and happiness.

"After days abandoned to sorrow, when he was

labouring under an infirmity which was the precursor of death, and the Archbishop (of Rouen) and priests were performing their office for the confessional purification, they required of him that as a penitent he should restore the lands which by force or fraud he had wrung from others, and wash out his sins with tears of repentance, to which he replied, 'Wretched man that I am! If I dismember the domains I have acquired, what shall I have to leave to my sons?'

"Upon this the ministers of the Lord answered, 'Your hereditary estates and the lands which you have justly obtained are enough for your sons; restore the rest, or else you devote your soul to perdition.'

"The Earl replied, 'My sons shall have all. I leave it to them to act mercifully, that I may obtain mercy.'"

Assuming the monastic habit, he then breathed his last, and was buried near his father at Préaux, his heart being sent to the monastery of Brackley in Northamptonshire, which he had founded, and there preserved in salt.

William of Malmesbury says of him, that his advice was regarded as though the oracle of God had been consulted; that he was the persuader of peace, the dissuader of strife, and capable of speedily bringing about whatever he desired by the power of his eloquence; that he possessed such mighty influence in

England as to change by his single example the long established modes of dress and diet. Limiting himself on the score of his health to one meal a day, in imitation of Alexius, Emperor of Constantinople, the custom was adopted generally by the nobility. In law, he was the supporter of justice; in war, the insurer of victory; urging his lord the King to enforce the statutes vigorously, he himself not only respecting those existing, but proposing new. Ever loyal to his sovereign, he was the stern avenger of treason in others.

It is a relief to read such a character of a man in these darkest days of feudalism, imperfect civilization, and demoralizing superstition.

A word or two respecting his children.

The twins, Waleran and Robert, were carefully brought up by King Henry I. from the time of their father's death, "for the King loved him much, because in the beginning of his reign he had greatly aided and encouraged him." On their arriving at the proper age they received knighthood at his hands, and Waleran was put in possession of all his father's domains in France and Normandy, his brother Robert receiving the earldom of Leicester and the lands and honours in England. Three of their sisters were given in marriage by Waleran:—Adeline to Hugh, 4th Sire de Montfort-sur-Risle, Amicia to Hugh de Château-neuf in Thime-

rais; and Albreda (or Aubrey) to William Louvel or Lupel, son of Ascelin Goel, Lord of Ivri.*

Isabel became, according to the *chronique scandaleuse* of that day, one of the many mistresses of Henry I., and subsequently married Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Pembroke. What became of Emma, the eldest born, we know not. According to Orderic she was betrothed, when only a year old, to Aumari, nephew of William, Count of Evreux, but from some impediment which occurred the marriage never took place. She probably died in infancy, or entered a convent. The author of "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates," besides Hugh, Earl of Bedford, already mentioned, gives Robert, a fourth son, whom he calls Dreux, Sire de Boisemont.

* *Vide* vol. ii., p. 223.

CHAPTER VII.

RAOUL DE TOENI, OR DE CONCHES.
TOUSTAIN FITZ ROU LE BLANC.
HUGH, ROGER, AND RAOUL DE MORTEMER.
AIMERI, VICOMTE DE THOUARS.

RAOUL DE TOENI, OR DE CONCHES.

"Totius Normaniæ signifer."—
Gul. Gemeticencis.

RAOUL (Ralph) de Toeni, Seigneur de Conches, second of that name, was the son or grandson (for it is not quite clear which) of that turbulent Roger de Toeni, who was one of the first to dispute the succession of the base-born William to the ducal throne of Normandy, and who, with his two sons Halbert and Elinance, was slain in a conflict with Roger de Beaumont. You have heard of him before as the messenger of the Duke to the French King with the disastrous tidings of the battle of Mortemer.

The honourable office of gonfanonier (standard-bearer) of Normandy was hereditary in their family

collateral descendants of its dukes from Mahaluc, uncle of Rolf or Rollo, but on whom it was first conferred has not transpired.

Previous to the battle at Senlac, Wace tells us the Duke ordered the consecrated gonfanon, which the Pope had sent to him, to be brought forth and unfurled. Then taking and raising it, he called to him Raoul de Conches, and said, "Bear my gonfanon, for I would not but do you right. By right and by ancestry your family are gonfanoniers of Normandy, and very good knights have they all been." "Many thanks to you," answered Raoul, "for the recognition of our right, but by my faith the gonfanon shall not be borne by me this day. To-day I claim quittance of that service, for I would serve you in another guise. I will go with you into the battle and fight the English as long as I have life to do so, and be assured that my hand will be worth more than those of twenty such men!"

There can be no doubt that he was as good as his word, although no especial act of gallantry has been recorded of him, for we find him rewarded by the gift of thirty-seven lordships, nineteen being in Norfolk, and making Flamstead, in Hertfordshire, his principal residence in England.

Orderic tells us that this Raoul gained great glory

in the wars, and was renowned among the first of the Norman nobles for honour and wealth, serving bravely in the armies of King William and Duke Robert, his son, for nearly sixty years. Of course he must mean alternately, for he was one of the nobles who took part with Robert Court-heuse on his first outbreak, in consequence of the insult of his brothers, William and Henry, who threw water on him from a gallery in a house where they were playing at dice. Raoul was banished, and his domains seized by the King, but through the intercession of friends obtained his pardon and the restoration of his estates.

In 1077, he married Elizabeth, or Isabel, daughter of Simon de Montfort l'Amauri, whose hand he obtained by the audacious act of carrying off by night Agnes, daughter of Richard, Comte d'Evreux, who was his half-sister, and marrying her to the said Simon. Orderic gives an amusing account of this Isabel and her sister-in-law Havise, daughter of William, Comte de Nevers, the wife of her brother William, Comte d'Evreux. The Countess Havise took offence, it appears, at some taunts of the Lady of Conches, and used all her influence with her husband and his barons to have recourse to arms, in which mischievous attempt she unfortunately succeeded. "Both these ladies," the chronicler tells us, "were great talkers, and spirited

as well as handsome; they ruled their husbands, oppressed their vassals, and inspired terror in various ways: but still their characters were very different. Havise had wit and eloquence, but she was cruel and avaricious; Isabel, on the contrary, was generous, enterprising, and lively, so that she was beloved and esteemed by those immediately about her. She rode in knightly armour when the vassals took the field, and exhibited as much daring amongst belted knights and men-at-arms as Camilla, the renowned virgin of Italy, among the squadrons of Tevenus."

By turns the people of Evreux and Conches plundered and destroyed the property of each other. The Lord of Conches, who was less powerful than the Count of Evreux, sought his sovereign, Robert Courtheuse, and laying before him an account of the losses to which he was exposed by the aggressions of the Count of Evreux, demanded the aid he had a right to expect from his liege lord; but Robert turned a deaf ear to his prayer, and Raoul in his distress sought a more powerful protector in the King of England, promising him by his envoys the fealty of all his estates in return for his assistance. Rufus was highly pleased at the proposal, and sent orders to Stephen Count of Aumale and Gerrard de Gournay, with others in command of his forces in Normandy, to give every aid to

Raoul de Toeni, and throw supplies of all kinds into his castles.

In the month of November, 1090, Count William assembled a large force and laid siege to Conches, his two nephews, Richard de Montfort and William de Breteuil joining him with their respective powers. Richard de Montfort was slain while taking possession of the Abbey of St. Peter de Châtillon at Conches, and in a subsequent attack William de Breteuil was taken prisoner. This worse than civil war, the wagers of it being all nearly related to each other, lasted three years; at length the Count of Evreux and his allies, ashamed that, having commenced hostilities on so frivolous a provocation, they had suffered the greatest losses, consented to a truce, and peace was proposed upon the following terms:—William de Breteuil paid three thousand livres for his ransom, and made his cousin Roger, eldest son of Raoul de Toeni, heir to the whole of his fief; the Count of Evreux appointed the same youth, who was his nephew, his successor in the comté. "But," adds the pious writer, "Divine Providence, which is not ruled by the will of man, provided otherwise." The boy was of an excellent disposition and much beloved by his companions, the vassals, and the neighbours. He had a great regard for the clergy and the monks, to whom he paid due

reverence. Rejecting the pomp of dress, in which the nobility too much gloried, his whole demeanour was simple and modest. Upon one occasion, when the knights were amusing themselves in the hall at Conches, playing at various games and talking on various subjects, "as the custom is," the Lady Isabel being present, the conversation took a serious turn, and one of Roger's youthful companions said, "I had a dream lately which much alarmed me. I saw our Lord upon the cross, his whole body livid and writhing with agony. My eyes were riveted upon him in the greatest terror." The listeners gravely remarked that so solemn and fearful a dream seemed to forebode some terrible judgment of God upon him. Baldwin, the son of Eustace, Count of Boulogne, who was of that company, said, "I, too, lately saw in a dream our Lord upon the cross, but in my vision He appeared bright and glorious, and smiled benignantly upon me, stretching forth one hand and making the sign of the cross upon my head." The bystanders all agreed that this vision portended some singular grace and favour. Young Roger de Toeni, upon this, said to his mother, "I know some one not far from here who had recently a similar dream." Her curiosity being excited, she pressed him to say who it was, and what had been seen; but the boy blushed, and was unwilling to say

more. At length, yielding to the general entreaties of his friends, he said: "A certain person saw in a vision the Lord Jesus, who, laying his hand on his head, blessed him, saying, 'Come quickly to me, beloved, and I will give you the joys of life.' I therefore believe firmly that one whom I know has been called by the Lord, and will not live long."

The three youths, we are told, experienced different fates, corresponding with what had been foreshadowed to each of them. The first, whose name is not given, was mortally wounded in a hostile inroad, and died without having confessed or received the viaticum. Baldwin, as is well known, took the sign of the Cross, and distinguishing himself in the Holy Wars, was, on the death of his brother Godfrey, elected King of Jerusalem. The youthful heir-presumptive of the Count of Evreux and William de Breteuil took to his bed the same year that he had seen his vision, and departing this life on the 15th of May, was buried amidst general sorrow with his ancestors in the Abbey of St. Peter's at Châtillon, now called of Conches.

Leaving my readers to decide for themselves the question how much credibility may be attached to this story, the like of which are to be found by scores in the pages of our monkish chronicles, I shall only direct their attention to the interesting view it affords

us of the manners and habits of the age in which it was written, the words "as the custom now is" proving that although the anecdote may be mere idle gossip, the picture of domestic life is drawn from personal knowledge and observation. Here we see the high-spirited Lady of Conches, seated on the dais or *haut pas*, in her own castle hall, the ruins of which were recently and may still be existing, surrounded by her family and their young companions, the knights owing service to her lord, the officers of her household, and her handmaidens in attendance on her—all the features of the court of a baron of the eleventh century familiar to the sight of the narrator; the various groups, each with its favourite pastime or topic of conversation, and the peculiar character imparted to the latter by the religious atmosphere of the age. We have here the earliest glimpse of that future King of Jerusalem when, probably, a newly-belted knight and a guest of Raoul de Toeni, he may have seen for the first time the young Countess Godechildé, daughter of his host, who, just separated from her husband, Robert de Meulent, and still under age, was shortly to become his wife, although not destined to share with him the crown of his eastern kingdom.

Raoul de Toeni, like his grandfather Roger, made a

journey into Spain, but with a more peaceful object. The former had hoped to carve out with his sword a dominion for himself, as Rollo had done in Normandy and Robert Guiscard in Sicily; but gained nothing by his enterprise except an empty name—being afterwards distinguished from other members of his family as Roger of Spain.

His grandson most probably went, like Walter Giffard, to visit the shrine of St. Iago of Compostella.

Previously to setting out on his journey he attended a chapter at the Abbey of St. Evroult, and implored pardon of the abbot and monks for having abetted Arnould d'Eschafour when he burnt the town of Ouche. Laying his gage on the altar, he made many pious vows to be fulfilled on his safe return, and recommended to their care his physician Goisbert, whom he much loved, and who, as soon as he departed, made his profession as a monk, and kept it for nearly thirty years. Goisbert must, therefore, have been personally known to Orderic—a fact which increases our reliance on any information he communicates to us respecting the family of De Toeni.

On Raoul's return, he tells us, the Lord of Conches faithfully redeemed his promises by the gifts of certain lands and privileges to St. Evroult, and that some

years afterwards he took Goisbert, the monk, with him to England, and, through his means, added to his former benefactions two farms or manors—one named Caldecot, in Norfolk, and the other Abington in Worcestershire; his wife, Roger and Ralph, his sons, freely joining in the grant, which was also confirmed by King William.

Ralph II. de Toeni died 24th March 1102, and was buried in the Abbey of Conches, beside his father and his son Roger. His widow Isabel, repenting of the sinful levity in which she had too much indulged in her youth, gave up the world, and took the veil in a convent of nuns at Haute-Bruyère (a priory of the order of Fontevrauld, at St. Remi-l'Honoré, near Montfort l'Amauri), where she reformed her life and worthily ended it in the favour of the Lord.

From Robert, a cadet of this house, the family of Stafford is descended, but I have not been able to satisfy myself as to the exact place of Robert and his brother Nigel de Stafford in the pedigree. They were probably younger brothers of the subject of this memoir, or possibly his uncles. They appear in Domesday as possessors of considerable property, but whether companions of the Conqueror in 1066 is uncertain. The first Robert de Toeni who assumed the name of Stafford, from the Castle of Stafford, married, it is said,

Avicia de Clare; but I cannot identify any such person.

TOUSTAIN FITZ ROU LE BLANC.

"Turstinus filius Rollonis vexillum Normanorum portavit."—*Orderic. Vit.*

This brave and renowned knight, to whom the honour of bearing the Duke's gonfanon at Senlac was finally accorded, was the son of Rollo, or Rou, a younger son of Crispin, Baron of Bec-en-Caux, near Fécamp, and maternally descended from the Princes of Monaco. Two of his cousins, William and Gilbert Crispin, were also in the invading army, and it appears probable that his brother, Goisfrid de Bec, or Marescal, was the progenitor of the great family of the Marshals. Nothing particular is recorded of Toustain Fitz Rou, however, previous to his selection by Duke William for the honourable office above mentioned, except that he was born at Bec.

"He bore the gonfanon," we are told, "boldly, high aloft in the breeze, and rode beside the Duke, going wherever he went. Whenever the Duke turned, he turned also, and wheresoever he stayed his course, there he stayed also." His kindred, the same writer tells us, still have quittance of all service for their inheritance on that account, and their heirs are entitled

to hold their possessions for ever. Monsieur Auguste le Prévost adds that a noble house in Upper Normandy, claiming to descend from this Toustain le Blanc, in memory of this office performed at Hastings, took for supporters of their arms two angels, each bearing a banner.

Apropos of "banner," in default of any more information respecting the man, let me say a few words concerning the gonfanon which he bore so gallantly "with a good heart," until it was planted in triumph beside "the hoary apple tree." We are expressly informed by Wace that it was "the one which the Pope Alexander had sent" to William, Duke of Normandy. The Latin writers use the word *Vexillum*, the French render it *Gonfanon* and *Enseign*, and the English, *Banner* and *Standard*. None of these words convey the least idea of the true shape of this consecrated ensign, nor of the device embroidered on it, and the indiscriminate use of the terms banner and standard at the present day can only suggest to the general reader an utterly erroneous one. That which we now call the royal standard is, strictly speaking, a banner. The colours of our infantry regiments are also banners. The earliest of these flags or ensigns appear to be nearly co-eval with the general adoption of armorial bearings, properly so called, viz., towards the end of

the twelfth century, and in the thirteenth its form was oblong, but fastened lengthwise to the staff, and embroidered with the full arms of the owner. In the fourteenth century it became perfectly square, the shape it has retained to the present day.

The standard, properly so called, is a long streamer, tapering towards the end, which is swallow-tailed. In England all standards bore the red cross of St. George on a square white field next the staff, the remaining portion being parted longitudinally by the colours of the owner, and embroidered with his badges, crest, and motto, after the adoption of these latter insignia, but never with his armorial coat, which was only displayed on the banner.

But neither banner nor standard of this description existed in the days of the Conqueror, the latter term implying in its original sense an ensign of any kind, the staff or pole of which was fixed into a framework of wood upon four wheels, and therefore called a *carrocio* by the Italians, and of which in England we first hear at the famous "Battle of the Standard," fought at Northallerton, 28th of August, 1138, and so called, it would seem, from the car-standard brought into the field by the English, haply for the first time, formed, we are told, of a mast placed on a car, having at its summit a silver pix containing the host,

and beneath three flags or streamers, said to have been those of St. Peter, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfred of Ripon; but this description leaves us uncertain of the shape, and no dependence can be placed on the representation given us in the "Decem Scriptores," from "Ailred de Bello Standardi," p. 339.

At all events, such was not the standard borne by Toustain the White, and we must turn to the Bayeux Tapestry for a contemporary pictorial illustration of the Norman gonfanon.

Therein we find it in two different forms, the most general resembling the later standard, but smaller, and terminating in three instead of two tails. In one instance only does it vary, presenting a semi-circular outline, with an indented border, and within it the figure of a bird, which, it has been conjectured represents the famous Ræfan of the Danes. By the side of the knight who bears this ensign is another, bearing a three-tailed gonfanon, displaying only a cross, which may be the consecrated ensign spoken of; but one almost precisely similar is seen in the hand of a mounted warrior, over whose head in the tapestry Mr. Stothard, as I have already stated, discovered the nearly obliterated name of "Eustatius," fairly presumed to indicate Eustace, Count of Boulogne.

Moreover, in other portions of the tapestry gonfanons

are to be seen of precisely the same form, borne by knights and princes, notably in the surrender of Dinan by Conan, Count of Brittany, to Duke William, and in the following subject, where William is giving arms to Harold.

In point of fact, the Norman gonfanon was a small two or three tailed flag attached to the lance, as we see the still smaller one flutter from below the steel heads of the lances of our light cavalry in the present day, but in the eleventh century its use was limited to leaders of rank. It is to be seen on the seals of our Norman kings and nobles, where they are represented on horseback, down to the time of Henry I., and was evidently the precursor of the heraldic standard of the middle ages, which preserved the distinctive feature of the bifurcated tail.

We are, therefore, unable to identify Toustain or the consecrated ensign he carried in the curious "Toile de St. Jean," or "Toilette de la Reine Mathilde," as the tapestry has been indifferently called, and though the Saxon ensign of the dragon is clearly indicated, Harold's own standard, so particularly described as representing an armed man richly embroidered and begemmed, is nowhere to be seen, and whether a pendant figure, like the dragon, or a streaming flag is left undecided.

HUGH DE MORTEMER.

Wace, in his description of the great battle, speaks of a "Hue de Mortemer, who, with three other knights, the sires of Auvilier, Onebec, and St. Cler, charged a body of English who had fallen back on a rising ground, and overthrew many." Monsieur Auguste le Prévost, in his note on this passage says authoritatively, but without citing his evidence, that "it was not Hugh de Mortemer who assisted at the battle of Hastings, but his father Raoul, son of Roger Lord of Mortemer sur Eaulne," in which opinion he is followed by Mr. Taylor, in his translation of Wace's account, without further information. In the recently compiled lists of MM. de Magny and Leopold de Lisle he is also called Raoul; but upon what evidence?

The English translator of Orderic, in a note on the death-bed discourse of William the Conqueror, says, equally without proof, that it was Roger de Mortemer, son of the elder Roger, who fought at Hastings.

It is quite true that we cannot implicitly rely upon Wace, who has been misled by his informants or betrayed by his memory in many instances, and where

his statements are improbable or contradicted by direct or circumstantial evidence we may justly consider him mistaken; but it is a bold thing to deny without very strong reasons that there was no Hugh de Mortemer in the fight at Senlac.

That Monsieur le Prévost may be justified in stating that it was not Hugh de Mortemer, son of Raoul and grandson of Roger, who was present at the battle I will not dispute, but Wace does not say it was, and there is such wild confusion and glaring contradictions in all the pedigrees I have examined of the Norman Mortemers that I consider it premature to discredit Wace's assertion, while I by no means deny that not only Ralph, but his father, or some other of the name of Roger of that family, may also have been present in the battle, as assumed by the erudite antiquaries whose opinions I have quoted. I propose, therefore, to give the worthy Prebend of Bayeux the benefit of the doubt till better advised, and at the same time state as briefly as possible the result of my own researches into the early history of the Mortemers or Mortimers.

"The first of the name that I have observed," says Dugdale, "is Roger de Mortimer, by some thought to be the son of William de Warren, by others of Walter de St. Martin, brother of that William." And farther

on he adds that "this Roger de Mortimer was by consanguinity allied to William the Conqueror, his mother being niece to Gunnora, wife to Richard, Duke of Normandy, and great-grandmother to the Conqueror."

For these statements he relies on Guillaume de Jumiéges, the Norman genealogist, to whom we are indebted for so much interesting information of this description, but who is occasionally as incorrect as his contemporaries. As I have already, in my notice of William de Warren, shown the fallacy of this descent of Mortimer, I shall not inflict it a second time on my readers.

There can be no doubt that Mortemer (latinized, Mortuo-mari), the locality from which the surname of the family was assumed, is situated in that portion of Normandy known as the Pays de Caux, and at the source of the river Eaulne; that the Castle of Saint Victor-en-Caux was the caput baroniæ of the family, and that it was in the possession of a Roger de Mortemer anterior to the invasion of England, as in 1054, twelve years previous to that event, Count Eudes, or Odo, brother of Henry I., King of France, invaded the territory of Evreux, and William, then Duke of Normandy, sent this Roger de Mortemer, at that time his general, with Robert, Comte d'Eu, Hugh de Montfort,

Hugh de Gournay, William Crispin, and Walter Giffard to oppose him.*

The French had taken possession of the town of Mortemer, and had passed the night in revelry. The Normans surprised them at daybreak, while the majority were asleep, and set fire to the town. Awakened by the flames in their lodgings, they armed themselves in the greatest confusion. Wace is as usual most graphic in his account. One man, he says, could not mount his horse, not being able to find his bridle; another could not get out of the house he was in, being unable to find the door. Every issue from the burning town was guarded by the Normans, and the fight was kept up in the midst of the conflagration from morning till three hours past noon. The French were nearly all killed or taken prisoners. One of the few who escaped was Eudes, the King's brother; but Guy, Count of Ponthieu, was taken prisoner, and his brother Waleran slain. There was no varlet, let him be ever so mean or of ever so low degree, but took some Frenchman prisoner and seized two or three horses with all their harness; nor was there a prison in all Normandy which was not full of Frenchmen. They were to be seen fleeing around, skulking in the

* See the long and elaborate controversy in M. de la Mairie's "Recherches Historiques," 1852, respecting the scene of this battle.

woods and bushes, the dead and wounded lying amidst the smouldering ruins, on the dunghills, about the fields, and in the by-paths.

Ralph III., surnamed "the Great," Comte de Valois and Amiens, by Orderic called De Montdidier, who was on the side of the French, succeeded in making his way out of the town, and took refuge in the Castle of Mortemer, where he was sheltered by its victorious lord, who had formerly sworn fealty to him, and who, after entertaining him for three days, safely conducted him to his own territories.

For this breach of duty to Duke William, Roger de Mortemer was banished from Normandy and his possessions confiscated, but being afterwards reconciled to the Duke, had them all restored to him, with the exception of the Castle of Mortemer, in which he had harboured William's enemy Count Ralph, and that the Duke gave to Roger's cousin, young William de Warren; a sufficient answer to those who assert that Roger was his son.

Orderic, in making the Conqueror allude to the oath of fealty Roger had taken to Count Ralph, does not assign the reason for it, or hint that Roger de Mortemer was the Count's son-in-law. Here at any rate is some very important light thrown upon the pedigree of Mortemer, as none of the ancient or later

genealogists have mentioned the wife of this Roger. Notwithstanding her noble descent, no trace of her is to be found even in the "Art de Vérifier les Dates," but her name appears to have been Hadewisa, who possessed of her own inheritance the vill of Mees, at the mouth of the river Bresle, in the diocese of Amiens, and the district called Le Vimieu, and her gifts to the Abbey of St. Victor at this place were confirmed in 1192 by Theobald, Bishop of Amiens. Montdidier is in the same diocese, and had been forcibly seized by Count Ralph, who eventually died there September 8, 1074. Roger de Mortemer, therefore, it has been reasonably presumed, did homage to the Count for the lands he held of his fief, and which were given to him in franc marriage with his daughter.

Still, upon the principal question, who were the parents of this Roger de Mortemer, we have no conclusive evidence; no fact to start from of an earlier date than 1054, when we find him a leader at the battle fought in his own town, beneath the walls of his own castle. His age at that period can be no more determined at present than his parentage; but we see he was married, in possession of the family estates, and had attained sufficient military rank and reputation to be intrusted by Duke William with the chief command of a division of his forces. He was

living, as well as his wife, in 1074, when, upon their joint petition, a priory which had been established at St. Victor as a cell to the abbey of St. Ouen was itself erected into an abbey. This was only twenty years after the battle of Mortemer, and unless incapacitated by illness, there is no reason why he should not have been eight years previously in that of Senlac. At all events he is said to have contributed sixty vessels to the Duke's fleet, and if not himself in the expedition, was doubtlessly represented, either by his son Ralph, or it may be by some other relative named Hugh.

My reason for the latter suggestion is that Ralph de Mortemer, by his wife Millicent, had two sons, the eldest of whom was named Hugh, and may not have been the first so named in the family, as he certainly was not the last. It is a question, indeed, with some, whether Ralph, if the son of Hadewisa, as there is no reason to doubt, could have been old enough in 1066 to bear arms at Hastings. His mother must have been very young in 1054, and her eldest born, in his infancy. I say eldest born, for it is not proved that Ralph was an only child any more than that his father Roger was an only child.

A Wydo or Guy de Mortimer, and a Bartholomew de Mortimer were living in the latter half of the twelfth

century, whose parents must have been contemporary with the first Roger de Mortemer we know of, and the branch of Mortimer of Ricard's Castle has yet to be traced to its offshoot.

Roger de Mortemer, living in 1074, was dead before the compilation of Domesday, when Ralph de Mortemer was found possessed of one hundred and twenty-three manors, besides several hamlets, and the Castle of Wigmore, built by William Fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford, and which became the principal seat of his family. His tenure of these estates in 1086 by no means proves that they were bestowed upon him for his services at Senlac. He might have succeeded to many by inheritance from his father Roger, or some other kinsman, on whom they had been bestowed by the Conqueror, and obtained some with his wife Millicent, whose family has yet to be discovered. It is most provoking to be left thus continually in the dark respecting the families of the wives of these Norman nobles. A knowledge of them would frequently be of the greatest importance to English history, by accounting in many instances for the acts of their husbands. Witness, for example, the fact recently discovered respecting Hadewisa, wife of Roger de Mortemer. Her being the daughter of Ralph de Montdidier, Count of Amiens, at once discloses the

difficult position in which Roger was placed between his sovereign and his father-in-law, to both of whom he owed fealty, and explains the excuse King William admitted he had for sheltering his Prince's enemy. A similar discovery regarding Millicent might as satisfactorily account for the conduct of her husband Ralph, who is one day in arms against his sovereign and the next for him, without any motive assigned for his tergiversation. Matrimonial alliances and family dissensions have naturally influenced, and will continue to influence, the actions of public men, and history is constantly corrected and illustrated by a disclosure of the secret springs of action which have their rise in private interests and feelings. I therefore say with the French Lieutenant de Police, "Cherchez la femme," and depend upon it, nine times out of ten you will arrive at the truth of the story.

I have as yet searched in vain to affiliate Millicent de Mortemer. Her family name is not alluded to by Stephen, Comte d'Aumale, who married her daughter Havise, in his confirmation charter to the Church of St. Martin-des-Champs, a Cluniac Priory in one of the suburbs of Paris. He simply informs us that she was then deceased. Vincent and Dugdale make no guess at it, and I shall prudently follow their example.

Roger de Mortemer, the eldest, was, I have stated,

dead before the compilation of Domesday, as we hear no more of him after 1074, and in 1088 we find Ralph in arms against William Rufus, having joined the movement of Bishop Odo in favour of Robert Court-heuse, and with the assistance of the Welsh doing much mischief in Worcestershire and on the Welsh borders. Two years afterwards, having been restored to the King's favour, he, with Robert, Comte d'Eu, and Walter Giffard, fortified his castle in Normandy against Court-heuse, and continued apparently true to his English overlord from that period.

In 1100 (the 1st of Henry I.) he founded the priory of Wigmore, and in the history of the foundation of that establishment, printed by Dugdale in his "Monasticon," Ralph de Mortemer is stated to have died in Normandy on the nones of August that same year. Clearly an error, clerical or other, as in 1104, on King Henry's arrival in Normandy, Ralph de Mortemer is mentioned by Orderic as amongst the many nobles of that duchy who possessed large estates in England, and received him with great honour, making him many costly presents befitting a king. The history itself also not only records his services in the war that followed, but states that King Henry gave him the command of the forces sent against Robert Court-heuse, whom he vanquished and brought captive to the King,

which, if it means anything, would amount to the assertion that he was the general-in-chief of the royal army at the battle of Tenchebrai in 1106 ; but of this there is no coroborative evidence, and as his name even does not appear amongst the known leaders in that memorable action, I conclude that he was at that time deceased.

By his wife, the unidentified Millicent, Sir Ralph de Mortemer had two sons: Hugh, who succeeded him, and William, to whom his brother gave Chelmarsh, and who, though represented to have died without issue, has been proved by Mr. Stapleton to have been the progenitor of the line of Mortimer of Attleborough. He had also a daughter named after her grandmother, Hadewisa, Havise, or Avice, wife, as I have previously stated, of Stephen, Comte d'Aumale. From this Hugh de Mortemer descended the many illustrious men of that name, whose blood, eventually mingling with that of the Plantagenets and the Tudors, still flows in the veins of the royal family of England.

AIMERI DE THOUARS.

We have already heard of "Le Visquens cil de Thouars" (Aimeri, Aumari, or Haimon, as he is indifferently called), in the first chapter of this volume, as

the enthusiastic admirer of the martial appearance of the Conqueror previous to the battle. "Never have I seen a man so fairly armed nor one who rode so gallantly, or bore his arms, or became his hauberk so well; neither any one who carried his lance so gracefully, or sat his horse and manœuvred him so nobly. There is no other such knight under Heaven! A fair Count he is, and a fair King he will be. Let him fight and he shall overcome; shame be to him who shall fail him!"

And assuredly no shame could be cast on "li bon Visquenz de Toarz" on that occasion, who, appointed by William to lead with Alain of Brittany the left wing of the army, principally composed of Poitevins, Bretons, Manceaux, and of course his own following, which was a numerous one, proved himself "no coward that day."

As neither Monsieur le Prévost nor Mr. Taylor have given us any information respecting the family of this undoubted companion of the Conqueror, I shall endeavour to supply the deficiency, more particularly as this is one of the Norman families in which a remarkable custom existed to the great confusion of the genealogists.

Monsieur de Besly, in a letter to his brother antiquary, the learned André du Chesne, dated 23rd May, 1620,

says: "Of all the great houses in this country, there are none in my opinion so difficult to give a clear account of as that of the Viscount of Thouars and of the other 'Gentilhommes' between the river Sèvre, which flows to Mortagne, and the Dive, which passes to Moncontour, the more because in these parts they have retained an ancient mode of succession exceedingly singular, and of which an example could scarcely be found elsewhere in the kingdom; for the eldest son in the direct line, if he had male issue only, took all the fiefs and 'biens nobles,' with the obligation of providing for his younger brothers, which was done by dividing the usufruct of the whole estate into nine portions, two of which they afterwards divided equally amongst themselves. But if the eldest son died before his younger brothers, his children succeeded only to his personalities, and all his estates went to the next brother charged with the provision as before to any younger brothers and the children of the elder deceased, by subdivision of the two-ninths of the usufruct equally amongst themselves, as I have already stated. The lands thus passed from brother to brother, and after the decease of the youngest reverted entirely and absolutely to his nephews, the sons of the eldest brother, who became heirs of each other in the regular order of succession. This custom, which was termed 'Retour,'

was abolished by the Three Estates of the kingdom in 1514, in consequence of its severity and the troubles and litigation it engendered.

"Here, in fact, you have the true cause and origin of the deplorable confusion at present to be seen in the genealogies of our nobility in these quarters. For the fief passing from brother to brother, all the younger assumed the full title as though they were lords in actual possession of the territories, in lieu of simple annuitants. Sometimes also these uncles permitted their nephew, the eldest son of their eldest brother, to do homage for the lands and bear the title, saving the right as to the annuity, the reservation of which, nevertheless, was not thereafter expressed in their charters, so that frequently two Viscounts de Thouars are found named in and signing the same charter. Sometimes twelve viscounts are found succeeding each other in less than thirty years, arising from the circumstance that the elder of several brothers having lived to a very great age, the younger having all become old men, soon followed him to the grave, leaving us in these days uncertain and at a loss to guess which was the father, which the son, which the uncle, and which the nephew; so that the ordinary calculation could not be relied upon in such a case which allows ninety or a hundred years for three generations."

Guided by this curious exposition of manners and customs, as interesting to the jurist as to the genealogist, I find that our Aimeri IV., Vicomte de Thouars, was the eldest son of Geoffrey II., Viscount de Thouars, by a lady named Ainor or Aldearde, but in consequence of the strange perplexing rules alluded to does not appear to have directly succeeded to him, though bearing in accordance with them the title of Viscount. He was present when Agnes, Duchess of Guyenne, gave the town of St. Angely to the abbey of that name in 1048. At the time of the invasion he was probably between twenty and thirty, and the husband of Aserengarde, sister of Raoul de Mauleon, living in 1069, by whom he had two sons, Herbert and Geoffrey, and a daughter, Ildegarde, who became the wife of Hugues VI., Sire de Lezingen.

Aimeri married, secondly, a lady named Ameline, for the health of whose soul, the souls of his father and mother, of his own soul, and those of his sons Herbert and Geoffrey, he gave, in December 1088, the Church of St. John the Evangelist, in the Castle of La Cheze, to the Abbey of St. Florent de Saumur. He also commenced the erection of another church in that castle, in honour of St. Nicholas, and confirmed to it all the gifts he had made to it, with the consent of his wife and children, Thursday, 15th of January, 1092.

He died the following year, and was buried in his new Church of St. Nicholas de la Cheze, leaving by his second wife, according to Père Anselm, four sons, —Savary, Raoul, Hugues, and another Geoffrey, whom he makes the successor to his grandfather Geoffrey; but as Savary and Raoul were both witnesses to charters in favour of St. Florent in 1054 and 1068, and as he makes Geoffrey out to be eighty years of age in 1120, and consequently born in 1040, they could not be the sons of Ameline, married between 1069 and 1088.

I can recommend the whole pedigree as a pleasing puzzle to all whom it may concern. I have extracted as much as concerns me on this occasion, which, little as it is, sheds some light on "li bon Visquenz de Toarz," who was "ne mauvais ne coarz, qui ert apelé Eimeris," and who "mult reçu le jor grand pris," and at the same time illustrates the singular custom recorded by Monsieur Besly.

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD, COMTE D'EVREUX.
GUILLAUME, HIS SON.
ROBERT, COMTE D'EU.
GEOFFREY, SON OF ROTROU, COMTE DE MORTAGNE.
ALAIN FERGANT, OR LE ROUX, EARL OF RICHMOND.

RICHARD, COMTE D'EVREUX, AND GUILLAUME HIS SON.

Of the group of nobles at the head of this chapter, the first two are mentioned by Wace, and Guillaume de Poitiers speaks only of the son of Count Richard.

Other writers, however, assert that both Count Richard and his son fought side by side in the battle of Senlac. It is possible they might have done so, as Count Richard died on the 13th of December of the following year, 1067, and there is nothing to prove that he was not in the army of invasion. It is remarkable, however, that in Taylor's List it is William, Count of Evreux, who is set down as contributing eighty vessels to the fleet; and as William was not Count of Evreux in 1066, it is possible that it is one

of the many mistakes we find in the baptismal names of these early nobles and their wives, and we ought to read "Richard," at least as far as the furnishing so noble a contingent as eighty vessels, which must surely have been the act of the reigning Prince, and not of his son, who might at the same time have had the command of them. Richard, Count of Evreux, was the grandson of Richard I., Duke of Normandy, and succeeded his father, Robert, Count of Evreux and Archbishop of Rouen, in 1037. Beyond the fact that at a date variously stated as 1055, 1060, and 1066 or 1067, he founded the abbey of St. Sauveur, nothing is stated of his acts and deeds worth recording; but he is described by the monk of Jumiéges as equally a good Christian and a good soldier.

He was twice married. His first wife was Adela (called by Père Anselm, Hélène), widow of the Roger de Toeni who was slain in 1038, by whom he had William, who succeeded him, and Agnes, third wife of Simon de Montfort, and whose abduction by her half-brother, Ralph de Toeni, I have already mentioned. By his second wife, Godechilde, of whose family we know as little as we do of that of his first, he had only one daughter, named after her mother, who became abbess of St. Sauveur, the abbey founded by her father at Evreux.

Of William, Count of Evreux, the undoubted companion of the Conqueror, much more is recorded, though nothing previous to the invasion, except his being present with his father at the great Council at Lillebonne, wherein that invasion was decided upon. He is reported as having borne himself valiantly in the battle, and received an ample share of the lands in England distributed by the Conqueror in 1070 to the chieftains who had accompanied him in his expedition. He returned to Normandy in 1073, and was one of the mediators in the treaty of Peace of Blanchelande (*vide* p. 198, *ante*). Shortly afterwards, King William, as if to indemnify himself for the property he had bestowed upon him in England, took from him the Castle of Evreux, and placed a royal garrison in it. Nevertheless, he fought on the King's side during the disturbances in Maine, and was taken prisoner at the assault of the Castle of Saint Suzanne, held against the King by Hubert, Vicomte de Maine. In 1087, on the death of the Conqueror, he recovered the Castle of Evreux, driving out the royal troops both from there and from the town of Dangu in the Norman Vexin.

Being without issue, he had adopted his niece Bertrade, daughter of his brother-in-law, Simon de Montfort. In 1089, Fulk le Rechin, or the Quarreller,

Count of Anjou, captivated by her beauty, determined to repudiate his third wife, Arengarde, daughter of Isambert, Lord of Châlet-dillon, whom he had only married, 21st January, 1087, in order to obtain the hand of the lovely Bertrade. At this moment, the Manceaux making a fresh effort to throw off the yoke of the Normans, Duke Robert Court-heuse entreated the Count of Anjou to assist him in their repression, which he promised to do on condition that the Duke would obtain for him the hand of Bertrade. On Robert's application to the Count of Evreux, he was answered: "Not unless you will restore me Noyon-sur-Andelle, Gassai, Cravant, Ecouchi, and the other lands of Raoul, my paternal uncle, who was facetiously called 'Tête d'Ane,' on account of his head of hair, and to my nephew, William de Breteuil, Pont Saint Pierre; for Robert de Gassai, son of Raoul, has made me his sole heir." The Duke accepted the condition, and restored to him the whole of these estates, except that of Ecouchi, which was held by Gerrard de Gournay, who was of the same family. The beautiful young Bertrade was, therefore, literally sold at that price to the profligate and detestable Count of Anjou, whom she subsequently fled from with the French King, Philip I.,—the natural consequence of such an unholy union, and the guilt of which lies on

the head of her uncle. I have already, in my notice of Ralph de Toeni, spoken of the war maintained for three years between him and this William, Count of Evreux, his uterine brother, kindled by the hostility of their respective wives. After their reconciliation the Count of Evreux did good service to Duke Robert against William Rufus, who endeavoured to take from him the city of Rouen; but afterwards, making his peace with the King on the departure of Court-heuse for the Holy Land, he was appointed, in 1097, one of the leaders of the army sent by Rufus, as Regent of Normandy in his nephew's absence, to wrest the province of the Vexin from the King of France, and after the reduction of Maine, in the following year, was charged, in conjunction with Gilbert de l'Aigle, with the keeping of the city of Mans.

Previous to the death of Rufus the Count of Evreux was out of favour with the King, in consequence of some reports to his disadvantage, attributed to the jealousy of Robert de Meulent, but he continued loyal to that monarch up to the day of the fatal hunt in the New Forest. He lost no time afterwards, however, in avenging himself on Robert de Meulent, whose land of Beaumont he overran and ravaged with unsparing fury.

In 1104 the new King of England, Henry I., coming over to Normandy with a numerous fleet and a

great power, in order to restore something like order into the duchy, which the indolent and dissolute Robert Court-heuse had abandoned to the shameless parasites by whom he was enslaved, Robert, conscious of his misconduct, and alarmed at the attitude of his brother, implored his forgiveness and protection, offering him, as a pledge of his sincerity, the whole Comté of Evreux, with the feudal services of its Count and all his vassals.

"The illustrious Count," says Orderic, "hearing that he was to be transferred like a horse or an ox, and wishing to preserve his integrity and fealty, said publicly to the Princes: 'I have served your father faithfully all my days, never having stained my sworn fealty in any matter hitherto. I have also observed it to his heir, and determined to use every effort to continue in that course; but it being impossible, as I have often heard learned doctors declare, on the faith of Scripture and the Word of God, that a man can serve two masters who are opposed to each other, it is my earnest desire to be subject to one lord only, lest, being liable to a double service, I may satisfy neither. I love both the King and the Duke; both are the sons of the King, my late lord, and I wish to respect both; but I will only do homage to one, and him I will faithfully serve.'"

The chronicler adds that this candid declaration pleased every one. Duke Robert himself placed the hands of the Count between those of the King, and William became Henry's "Man," fighting for him loyally against his former lord, Robert Court-heuse, at the battle of Tenchebrai, A.D. 1106. But the restless and mischief-making spirit of his wife, by whom he was blindly guided, disturbed the good feeling between William and his sovereign, who had begun very highly to appreciate the services of the Count of Evreux. Proud and envious, she involved him in continual quarrels with the most influential nobles about the person of the King, and ultimately induced him to destroy a tower which Henry had caused to be erected in Evreux.

This act embroiled him with the King, and caused his banishment and the confiscation of his estates. He sought refuge with Fulk V., Count of Anjou, the son of his niece Bertrade, A.D. 1112. Recalled and re-established in his estates after fourteen months' exile, he was a second time banished and again pardoned and restored to his rank and property, and died of apoplexy, 18th April, 1118, without issue.

I cannot resist quoting from Orderic a ridiculous story connected with the death of this Count, because it is so seriously told by the worthy monk of St.

Evroult, and illustrates the curious state of education of the period.

"About this time," says the writer, "a prodigy was seen in England. A rustic having bought a cow, presumed to be with calf, at Ely, killed and opened it by order of Henry the Breton, bishop of that diocese. Strange to say, instead of a calf, three little pigs were found in it.

"A certain pilgrim returning from Jerusalem, who chanced to meet the countryman driving the cow home from market, told him, and afterwards repeated to the Bishop and other bystanders, that three great persons in the dominions of King Henry would die that year, and many severe calamities would follow. The pilgrim's prophecy was justified by events which occurred in the time specified.

"In fact, William, Count of Evreux, died on the fourteenth of the kalends of May (11th April), and was interred at Fontenelles, in the Abbey of St. Wandrille, by the side of his father Richard. Soon afterwards Queen Matilda, whose baptismal name was Edith, died on the kalends (1st) of May, and lies buried in the Church of St. Peter at Westminster; likewise Robert, Earl of Meulent, expired on the nones (5th) of June, and reposes with his father and brother in the chapters of the monks at Préaux. After the

death of these distinguished persons there were great troubles in Normandy."

It needed no ghost from the grave, nor second-sighted pilgrim to predict that three persons of rank would die in the course of the ensuing twelve months, or that there would be troubles in some parts of the dominions of Henry.

The production of the three little pigs is by far the most surprising part of the story. Are we much less prone to gulp down preposterous statements in the 19th century?

One fact, however, is incidentally brought to light in this foolish fiction which is important to the genealogist. The double name of the Queen warns us of the confusion that may arise from our ignorance of such instances in other cases; one of which may possibly be discovered in the puzzling entry in Domesday Book respecting the King's daughter "Matilda" (*vide* p. 84, *ante*).

I have given you the character of Isabel, wife of Ralph de Toeni, it is but fair to place before you that of her antagonist, Havise, from the same authority.

"The Countess," writes Orderic, "was distinguished for her wit and beauty. She was one of the tallest women in all Evreux, and of very noble birth, being the daughter of William, the illustrious Count

of Nevers. Disregarding the counsels of her husband's barons, she chose rather to follow her own opinion, and her ambition prompting her to meddle in political affairs, she was easily led to engage in rash enterprises."

The Countess died in 1114, and was buried at Noyon-sur-Andelles, in the priory which, with her husband, she had founded in 1108, but which was unfinished when Orderic was writing the eleventh book of his "History," viz., 1136. The building was razed to the ground in the reign of Charles IX., who laid the foundations of a magnificent palace there, and since that time the place has been called Charleval.

ROBERT, COMTE D'EU.

"E li Quens d'Ou bien i feri."—
Roman de Rou, l. 13828.

The town of Eu, in the province of Caux, situated on the left bank of the river Eu or Ou, now called the Bresle, about half a league from Tréport, is as well known to English tourists as to historians, from the memorable events connected with it, and the rank of the individuals who have borne the title of its counts, the first being Geoffrey, natural son of Richard I., Duke of Normandy, created by him Count of Eu and Brionne. The nuptials of William the Conqueror and

Matilda of Flanders were celebrated at Eu, and Count Baldwin, her father, availed himself of the opportunity to obtain from the Duke of Normandy the restoration of Brionne to the sons of Gilbert son of Geoffrey, who had been dispossessed of his domains by his uncle, Richard II. Duke William so far consented that he gave the lordship of Bienfaite and Orbec to Richard, the eldest son, and those of Mole and Sap to his brother Baldwin; but the county of Eu had been given by Richard II. to his half-brother William, who, by his wife Leceline, daughter of Turketil d'Harcourt, left three sons: Robert, Comte d'Eu, the subject of this memoir, William, surnamed Busac, Count of the Hiemois, and afterwards of Soissons, and Hugh, Bishop of Lisieux. The date of the death of the first William, Comte d'Eu, is not exactly known, but it was previous to 1054, when we find his son Robert one of the commanders of that division of the Norman army which defeated the French at Mortemer.

In 1066, he contributed sixty ships to the invading fleet, and fought gallantly ("bien i feri") at Senlac, and for these services received large estates in Sussex and other counties in England, with the custody of the Castle of Hastings.

In 1069, in conjunction with Robert, Comte de Mortain, he surprised the Danes in Lindsey, and

drove them with great slaughter to their ships (*vide* p. 109, *ante*).

After the death of the Conqueror, the Comte d'Eu espoused the cause of Robert Court-heuse, and maintained it for some time; but, disgusted by his capriciousness, levity, and debauchery, went over, with many other Norman lords, to the side of William Rufus, allowing his castles to be garrisoned by the royal forces.

In 1077 he attended the funeral of his estimable brother, Hugh, Bishop of Lisieux, who, being seized with what he felt was a fatal illness at the village of Pont l'Evesque, begged to be carried to Lisieux, that he might breathe his last in the Abbey of St. Peter there, the building of which, begun by his predecessor, Bishop Herbert, he had most liberally completed. Placed on a convenient hand-litter, he was carried from the village, the clergy of the highest rank and the most honourable of the laity bearing their beloved father on their shoulders; but while they were using their utmost efforts to reach Lisieux, some four leagues distance from Pont l'Evesque, it became evident the Bishop's last moments were approaching, and they therefore turned out of the road on to a piece of level turf by its side. There, laid in the bright sunshine, which "shrouded the dying prelate in its blaze," amid the prayers and tears of his attached friends, "the

venerable Hugh, the gem of the priesthood, and the best of men," calmly expired, 17th of July, 1077. A cross was erected in the field near the road where the Bishop died, which is called to this day (*circa* 1127) "the Bishop's Cross." * The field has since retained the name of "Le pré l'Evesque."

The Count's other brother, William de Busac, does not occupy so honourable a place in Norman history. His rebellion against his namesake and sovereign was unjustifiable and ineffectual. Defeated and banished, his honourable reception by Henry, King of France, and his marriage with the heiress of Reginald, Comte de Soissons, availed him but little. His name is all but unknown to the readers of English history, and his race dropped *en quenouille* after two generations.

Robert I., Comte d'Eu, died *circa* 1090, leaving by Beatrix his wife, one of the many noble ladies of whose family we are left in lamentable ignorance, William, who succeeded him, and who, joining in the rebellion

* Writing on this, the 25th July, 1873, it is impossible for me not to mention that on this day are consigned to the tomb the earthly remains of one of the most distinguished prelates of modern times, who nearly eight hundred years since the death of Bishop Hugh, in the same month and within forty-eight hours of the same day, died "in a field by the road side," by a lamentable accident it is true, but was, nevertheless, perhaps the only other bishop whose eyes have closed in death upon a spot of green turf, golden with a July sun, and whereupon his family proposes to erect a cross in memoriam, such as did the devoted friends of the excellent Bishop of Lisieux.

against Rufus in 1096, was taken prisoner, and deprived of sight, as well as horribly mutilated, and a younger son, named Robert. Of his "works of piety," as Dugdale phrases it, we may record the foundation, between 1057 and 1066, of the Abbey of Tréport, near Eu, by request of his wife, and the advice of Duke William and Maurilliers, Archbishop of Rouen.

GEOFFREY, SON OF ROTROU, SEIGNEUR DE MORTAGNE, COMTE DE PERCHE.

Guillaume de Poitiers distinctly enumerates "Godfredus Rotronis Moritoniæ comitus filius" as one of the combatants at Senlac, and "De Meaine il viel Geffrai" is considered by Monsieur le Prévost a misreading for De Mortaigne," Duchesne's MS. reading "Marreigne." There is certainly no reason for believing that Geoffrey de Mayenne, the implacable enemy of William the Conqueror, took any part whatever in the invasion of England in 1066; but I think Wace was misled by some report to believe he did, because the epithet "le viel" would not at all apply to Geoffrey de Mortagne, who was very young at that period, and did not succeed his father, Rotrou I., Vicomte de Châteaudun and Comte de Mortagne, for at least thirteen years after the Conquest, as the Count was certainly living in 1079, at the time of the dedi-

cation of the Church of St. Denis de Nogent, the precise date of his death being unknown. Guillaume de Poitiers so completely identifies his man by describing him as "the son of Rotrou, Count of Mortagne," that whatever the mistake may be in the "Roman de Rou," I am justified in preferring the archdeacon's authority, particularly as it is supported by the testimony of Orderic, who gives Geoffrey a very high character. "This Count," he tells us, "was magnanimous, handsome, and strong; he feared God, was a devout friend of the Church, a staunch protector of her clergy and the poor. In peace he was gentle and courteous, and of most obliging manners; in war he was powerful and successful, and became formidable to the neighbouring princes who were his enemies. The nobility of his own birth and that of his wife Beatrice rendered him illustrious above all his compeers, and he had amongst his subjects warlike barons and brave governors of castles. He gave his daughters in marriage to men of the rank of counts: Margaret to Henry, Earl of Warwick, and Juliana to Gilbert de l'Aigle, from whom sprung a noble race of handsome children. The glory of Count Geoffrey was exalted by such a progeny, and he maintained it by his valour and courage, his wealth, and alliances. Above all, having the fear of God, he feared no man, but marched

boldly with a lion's port. Laying claim to the strong Castle of Domfront, which had belonged to his great-grandfather, Warin de Belesme, and other domains as his right, he endeavoured to dispossess his cousin Robert (de Belesme) of them. He was grieved to harass the unarmed and innocent, but he could not bring the public enemy (for such assuredly was Robert de Belesme) with whom he had a just quarrel to a fair field for deciding it.

"Towards the close of the year 1100, Geoffrey fell sick unto death, and having called about him the lords of Le Perche and Le Corbonnais, who were vassals to him as Count of Mortagne, he put his affairs in order with great wisdom, praying them to keep his lands and strong places for his only son Rotrou, who had gone in pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Then the brave lord having duly received all the rites of the Church, and assumed the habit of a Cluniac monk, died in his Castle of Nogent-le-Rotrou in October 1100, and was buried in the church of the monastery of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, founded in 1030 by his grandfather, Geoffrey I., and which he richly endowed with lands and other possessions."

At the close of the year his son Rotrou returned in safety from the Holy Land, and took possession of his estates. On the fifth day after reaching home, being

Sunday, he paid his devotions at the Church of St. Denis, at Nogent, where his father had been buried, and made his offering on the altar of St. Denis, with the palms he had brought from Jerusalem.

By his wife Beatrice, daughter of Hilduin, fourth Comte de Montdidier and Ronci, Geoffrey had besides Rotrou, who succeeded him, and the two daughters named above, a third daughter named Mahaut or Mathilde, married first to Raymond I., Vicomte de Turenne, and secondly to Gui de las Tours, in Limousin.

From his daughter Margaret, Countess of Warwick, descended the celebrated Beauchamps and Nevils, Earls of Warwick, and many other illustrious personages.

ALAIN LE ROUX, EARL OF RICHMOND.

We have here an instance of the confusion existing in ordinary accounts of the companions of the Conqueror, and which renders some such work as this an absolute necessity for the general reader who is desirous of obtaining, without the trouble of research, something like an accurate idea of the persons whose names alone he meets with in histories of England.

Previously to the publication of "Recherches sur le Domesday" in 1842, the most erroneous and conflicting descriptions of the Alain of Brittany who fought

at Hastings existed in the baronages and genealogical peerages the reader must have consulted, and the first popular English work which threw a light upon this particular tissue of blunders was Mrs. Green's "Lives of the Princesses of England," published in 1849.

As in the case of Count Odo of Champagne, no one before Mr. Stapleton's discoveries surmised that Adelaide, the Conqueror's sister, had three husbands, so in this instance it was unknown to English genealogists before 1842 that there were *two* Counts Alain of Bretagne, one of whom married Constance, daughter of the Conqueror, in 1086 (*vide* p. 83, *ante*), and was consequently the best known. This latter Alain, surnamed Fergant, which in the Breton language signifies "the less," or "the younger" (Lobineau gloss), was the son of Hoel V. Comte de Bretagne, by his wife Havise de Bretagne, sister and heiress of Conan II., Comte de Bretagne, and it is questionable on account of age whether he could have been in the battle.

The other Alain, known as Le Roux,* and who certainly was in the invading army, was the second son of Eudes, Comte de Penthièvre, by Agnes, daughter of Alain Cagnart, Comte de Cornouaille, and great-grand-

* "La Rebru," or "Le Ruibriz" *i. e.* Red-faced (Lobineau Gloss). Sir F. Palgrave renders it Rui-Breizad, the British King—a fanciful translation.

son of Richard II., Duke of Normandy, and therefore, in the charter by which King William conferred upon him the lands of Edwin in Yorkshire, is called by the Conqueror "Nepoti meo," being his nephew according to the custom of Brittany and Normandy.

Neither of the Alains are named by Guillaume de Poitiers or Orderic Vital amongst the list of the leaders at Senlac, but according to Wace, "Alain Felgan" (Fergant) joined the Duke at St. Valery, and brought with him many barons from among the Bretons, and previous to the battle he was appointed, in conjunction with Aimeri de Thouars, to lead the wing of the army which was composed of the Poitevins, the Bretons, and the barons of Maine. He subsequently tells us that Alain Fergant, Count of Brittany, had a great company of Bretons, and fought himself like a noble and valiant knight. Gaimar, a Norman or Breton poet, also says—

"Le quiens Alain de Bretaigne
Bien i ferit od sa compaigne."

and records William's grant to him of the honour of Richmond. He also describes him as his cousin and "gentilhome de grant parage," and it is, therefore, the less singular that Alain le Roux should have been confounded with Alain Fergant, who was also a collateral descendant of the old Dukes of Normandy.

Two brothers of Alain the Red, viz., Alain the Black, who succeeded him in the earldom of Richmond, and according to Lobineau an elder brother named Brient, are also reported to have been companions of the Conqueror; but their deeds at Senlac are not commemorated. Brient, or Brian of Brittany, figures, however, after the Conquest as assisting, in company with William Fitz Osbern, to suppress the rising in Devonshire (*vide* p. 178). He is also said to have defeated the two sons of Harold twice in one day with great slaughter, 24th June, 1069, when with a large force from Ireland they landed at the mouth of the river Tivy. It is probable, therefore, that he was with his brother Alain the Red at Hastings and Senlac. None of these were Comtes *de* Bretagne as carelessly stated, but Comtes *en* Bretagne, according to a custom still prevalent on the Continent, and Alain the Red is more correctly designated by Gaimar as "Count Alain *of* Brittany," not as Wace has it, "Alain, Count of Brittany."

This Alain the Red was rewarded for his services with all the lands of Eorl Edwin, in Yorkshire, particularly eight lordships, which subsequently became the county of Richmond, and of which this Alain was the first earl. Altogether his share of the spoil amounted to nearly two hundred

manors, one hundred and sixty-six being in Yorkshire alone. He built the Castle of Richmond, from which the county took its name, and which, as Scott sings, "stands fair on the hill," overlooking the river Swale, died unmarried in 1089, was buried in the Abbey of St. Edmunds-Bury, in Suffolk, and was succeeded in his earldom by his next brother, Alain le Noir, who had also fought at Senlac and been richly rewarded with one hundred-and-twenty manors, the greater number being in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Dugdale, and after him all the English writers on this subject down to Sir Henry Ellis, have confounded Alain surnamed Fergant with Alain the Red, and given to the son-in-law of the Conqueror the whole of the estates bestowed by him on each. The authors of "Recherches sur le Domesday" have with great care and discrimination separated the various donations; but in supposing that the husband of Constance was in the battle of Senlac I believe them to be mistaken, and therefore, although the most interesting of these Breton nobles, I am precluded from including him amongst the companions of the Conqueror.

END OF VOL. I.

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